

ADRIAN ROGERS

# LEGACY

C O L L E C T I O N



TITUS

These transcripts are taken straight from live audio recordings of Adrian Rogers during his tenure as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. As such some of the transcripts may contain stutters, stammers, transcription errors, and other authentic remarks as would be common in a live setting.

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# Titus

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# Trophies of Grace

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** January 2, 1994

**Main Scripture Text:** Titus 1:1–4

*“Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.”*

TITUS 1:4

## Outline

Introduction

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- A. A Sovereign Grace
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## Introduction

Thank you, young people, and that is, indeed, a wonderful, wonderful setting for the message on grace. It is never too little or too late with our Lord, and that is the sum total of the message, this morning, if we analyze it.

Find the Book of Titus. Right after 2 Timothy, you'll come to Titus. Turn to chapter 1, and then look up here. We're going to find out that Titus is a letter that is written by Paul to his spiritual son. And as Paul writes the letter, he identifies himself at the beginning of the letter. That's the way they did it in Bible times. They would tell you who is writing the letter, and then write the letter. Now most of our letters today—we get long letters, and we have to wait until the end to find out who's doing the writing. Paul begins it this way: *“Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;”*—so, Paul, now, has introduced himself; and now, he tells to whom he is writing—*“to Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour”* (Titus

1:1–4).

And so in these verses, we find, first of all, the one who has written this letter; his name is Paul. We find out to whom he has been writing. He's been writing to his spiritual son; that means someone that he had won to faith in Christ. And as I looked at this book, and read it through, there's one word that jumped out at me several times, and I want you to notice it: the middle of verse four—the word *grace*. In verse 11: "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation*"—in chapter 2, verse 11, that is (Titus 2:11). And then, in chapter 3 and verse 7: "*That being justified by his grace*" (Titus 3:7). And then, chapter 3 and verse 15: "*Grace be with you all. Amen*" (Titus 3:15). It's kind of interesting to see that, when Paul was writing his spiritual son, Titus, somebody that he had led to the Lord, he just keeps ringing this note of grace.

*Amazing Grace,  
How sweet the sound.*

—JOHN NEWTON

And as you read this book, you can find out that Paul is very grateful for Titus, because Titus was a trophy of grace. Now I say that having thought about it. As a matter of fact, the title of the message this morning is this: "Trophies of Grace."

You see, Paul had won Titus to Christ. Titus was a young Greek. He wasn't a Jew; he was a Greek. Paul, who was a Jew, had witnessed to him, had won him to Christ, and called him his own son in the faith (Titus 1:4). "You are my trophy of grace." Now in Jerusalem, there was a big debate as to whether the Gentiles could be saved without keeping the law. Paul took Titus, and took him to Jerusalem, and used him as Exhibit A: that the Gentiles were saved, and they were saved by grace. You can read about that in Galatians 2—how Titus was a trophy of grace.

Now that makes me want to ask a question: Are you a trophy of grace? I mean, if you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Not only are we to be witnesses, we ought to be part of the evidence. Titus was evidence. Paul took Titus to Jerusalem, and said, "That is what the grace of God can do. Look what God's grace has done. This is my son in the faith." That brings me to ask another question: Do you have any children in the faith? Are you a spiritual father? Are you a spiritual mother? Do you have children? Is there anybody that you can look, and say, "Did you know I won him to Jesus? That's my son. That's my daughter." You can't do anything more wonderful than to share your faith and to bring somebody else to Jesus Christ. You say, "Well, God didn't call me to do that, Pastor. God just called me to preach." Or, "God called me to teach." Or, "God called me to give." There's nothing wrong with you that a good dose of salvation or an old-fashioned revival wouldn't cure.

*A Christian who doesn't win souls is like a bus driver who won't drive a bus. He's like a barber who won't cut hair.* It's not optional; God has commanded us. Jesus said,

*“Ye shall be witnesses unto me”* (Acts 1:8). The question comes: Do you have any children? Not only was Paul a father, but he was a grandfather, because, now, Titus was winning others to Christ. As a matter of fact, he was a great-great-grandfather; and, a lot of us are great-great-grandfathers. We have won people to Jesus who are winning people to Jesus, who are winning people to Jesus, who are winning people to Jesus.

On April 21, 1855, there was a man named Kimball; and, he went to a shoe store, where there was a shoe clerk that he had a burden for. The shoe clerk’s name was Dwight. And Mr. Kimball went in, and he stuttered and stammered, but he told Dwight about Christ. And there, in the shoe racks, this young 19-year-old clerk bowed his head, and gave his heart to Jesus, and became Mr. Kimball’s spiritual son, on April 21, 1855. That young man had a heart for souls, and he lived in Chicago. And he began to gather boys and girls for Sunday School, to tell boys and girls about Christ. His name was Dwight L. Moody. He was the Billy Graham of his day. Eventually, he became so proficient at winning boys and girls to Christ in Sunday Schools in Chicago, he, this unlettered, uneducated shoe clerk, began to preach and hold great crusades. And God’s anointing and God’s appointing was upon Dwight L. Moody; and, thousands were coming to Christ through the ministry of Dwight L. Moody.

He became so well known that they asked him to come to England and preach. And Dwight L. Moody went to England, and he preached in the church of one of the most eloquent, erudite, and cultured English clergymen that there was on the continent; and, that man’s name was F. B. Meyer—Frederick Brotherton Meyer—an imposing name and an imposing pastor. And he thought it would be nice to have Dwight L. Moody, the shoe clerk, to come and speak to his congregation. Moody wasn’t up there long, before Meyer felt he’d made a terrible mistake, because Moody—very much like our friend, John Bramlett, who’s sitting here, at the front—was very exuberant. Besides that, he murdered the King’s English. Now he didn’t disappoint the King, but he did murder the King’s English. As a matter of fact, they said that Moody was the only person that could pronounce Jerusalem in two syllables. And Moody preached; he preached Christ. Meyer, this cultured, erudite British clergyman was thinking, “Oh, oh, when will he be finished?” And he was sitting there, just squirming, waiting for Moody to finish.

Finally, it was over; the ordeal was over for Meyer. Later, Meyer met one of his ladies, and said, “How is it with you today, madam?” She was one of the workers in the church, one of the ladies of that church. She said, “It is glorious, Brother Meyer. After Moody has been here, God has so touched my heart, that I have won every girl in my class to Jesus Christ,” because Moody had talked about having a burden for souls.” Meyer said something—he said, “I learned something that day.” He said, “I learned from Dwight L. Moody the language of the soul. And my life was radically changed by Moody.”

Meyer came to the United States to preach, and Meyer was preaching in a college. And in that college, some ministerial students and Meyer were talking about total surrender. And F. B. Meyer said to those students, “You need to give everything to Jesus Christ—everything.” And he said, “If you cannot do that, if you’re not willing to do that,” he said, “would you tell God, at least, ‘O God, I’m not willing, but I am willing to be made willing.’” That’s a pretty good approach: “Lord, I don’t know whether I’m willing or not, but I’m willing to be made willing. Please, O God, help me; start with me, wherever I am.” And there was a student out there who was about to quit. His name was Wilbur Chapman. And Wilbur Chapman said, “O God, that’s me. I haven’t been willing to give You everything. But O God, today, I’m willing to be made willing. Start with me where I am, and take me where I need to go.”

And God started with Wilbur Chapman. God did something in the heart of Wilbur Chapman that day, and God worked His grace in Wilbur Chapman’s heart. “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). And God did that for Wilbur Chapman, and Wilbur Chapman became a world-famous evangelist. Wilbur Chapman needed a helper. And do you know who he found for a helper? An ex-professional baseball player—a man whose forte was running the bases, kind of like Ty Cobb was. His name was William Sunday—Billy Sunday. Sunday came to help Chapman in his evangelistic work. Sunday would do the counseling, sometimes. Sometimes, he would put up and take down the tent. Sometimes, when Chapman could not be there, Billy Sunday would preach. Finally, Chapman said, “I’m old and worn out now. I’m going to turn this ministry over to you, Billy Sunday.” And Billy Sunday took the ministry of Wilbur Chapman.

Who, among us, who’s studied the Christian Church, does not know the ministry of Billy Sunday? Billy Sunday held some great crusades right here, in Memphis, Tennessee, in his day. He was, again, the Billy Graham of his day. A world famous name—Billy Sunday. He did all kinds of antics and things, but God’s hand was on Billy Sunday. Billy Sunday came to Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1924, to hold a revival crusade. There was great power, and God came down upon Charlotte; and, there was a mighty revival in Charlotte, in 1924. Out of that Billy Sunday campaign, there was a group of men who abandoned themselves together to continue to pray for Charlotte, and they called it the Charlotte Prayer Meeting. And this group of men, who would meet regularly, had this prayer—they said, “O God, O God, send another revival to Charlotte that not only will touch Charlotte, but will impact the world.”

In 1934, another evangelist came as a result of that prayer meeting; his name was Mordecai Ham. Mordecai Ham, by the way, has held revival crusades here, in the city of Memphis, also, mightily anointed of God. And Mordecai Ham was preaching in 1934, in Charlotte. There was a 15-year-old lanky farm lad sitting out there, with some of his

buddies. He didn't like being out in the front, because it looked like the preacher was preaching right to him, so he thought maybe he could get up there, in the choir, and it wouldn't bother him so bad. So this 15-year-old farm lad found himself up in the choir. But the grace of God found that boy; his name Billy Graham. Billy Graham was saved in that crusade that was led by Mordecai Ham.

And God alone knows the kings, and the presidents, and the moguls, and the ordinary people, and people in far lands, and people in this land, and thousands and thousands who've come to Christ through the ministry of Billy Graham. Billy Graham has touched my own life, personally. I thank God for the influence he's had on me. That's an amazing story. But if you'll trace it all the way back—all the way back—you'll find a man named Kimball. Most of us have never heard the name Kimball, laying a trembling hand on the shoulder of a lad, just a boy named Moody, and bringing Moody to faith in Christ. Think of the great-great-great-great-great-grandchildren that Kimball has. Think of it. Think of it. You never know what you do, when you bring a soul to Christ. You never know the ripple that will touch the shore of eternity, when you drop that stone of grace into somebody's heart.

O friend, do you have any trophies of grace? Are you a trophy of grace? Paul says, "Titus, you are my son in the faith" (Titus 1:4). Why don't you say, "God, this year, by Your grace, I'll bring a soul to Jesus Christ. I will have a son in the faith. I want to have a daughter in the faith."

Now what is *grace*? Grace is God's unmerited favor. It is the kindness of God shown to one who doesn't deserve it, and who can never earn it. We've put it in an acrostic around here. Grace—g-r-a-c-e—"God's riches at Christ's expense." Now let me tell you about that grace. Let me say three basic things about it.

## **I. The Delight of Grace is Liberty**

First of all, there is the delight of grace; and, the delight of grace is liberty. Grace—amazing grace—gives liberty. Jesus said, "I've come to set the captive free, to give liberty" (Luke 4:18). "*If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*" (John 8:36). Now why does it give liberty? Well, let's just see what grace is.

### **A. A Sovereign Grace**

First of all, this grace is sovereign grace. Look, in verse 1: "*Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect*" (Titus 1:1). We call that *sovereign grace*. God elected us. He is the sovereign God, and God has chosen us. If you are saved, it is because God has elected you: God loved you, God sought you, and God brought you. It is sovereign grace. You say, "Well, Pastor, if it's sovereign grace, then, maybe, I can't get in on it?" Well then, you can. Don't worry about it. If you want to

be saved, you can. I love John chapter 6; it's so wonderful. John chapter 6—listen to this verse, in verse 37—verse 37: *“All that the Father hath given me shall come to me;”*—now, that's sovereign grace. Then, Jesus said this—*“and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out”* (John 6:37).

You want to know whether you're one of the elect or not? How would you like to find out whether you're one of the elect or not? Just come to Jesus, and you'll be one. That's right—just come to Jesus. You want to be saved? I am glad that I can stand in this pulpit, and say, “Whosoever will, may come—anybody.” Hallelujah! It is sovereign grace; and yet, it is free to all who will receive and all who will say yes to the Lord Jesus Christ.

### B. **A Seeking Grace**

And because it is sovereign grace, it is seeking grace. Do you know that you come to Him because He took the initiative? He's the One who called you. Your salvation did not start with you; it started with God. The Bible tells us, in Romans chapter 3, verse 11: *“There is none that seeketh after God...no, not one”* (Romans 3:11–12). “Oh,” you say, “but I know plenty of people who are seeking after God.” But the only reason they seek after God is because He first sought them.

I may have told you before, that when I was in the sixth grade, I looked over there, at a girl sitting about four desks and two rows over from me—her name was Joyce Louis Gentry. She's now Joyce Louis Rogers. But I saw her there, in the sixth grade, and I wrote a love note; and, I walked by, and dropped it by her desk. She still has that love note. You know, it was a good one. I dropped it by her desk. I mean, we still have that in a scrapbook. And do you know what? She began to turn, and look at me, and say, “Who is this fellow?” But you know why she loves me? Because I first loved her; because I took the initiative. And friend, the Bible is God's love note. It is God saying to you, “I love you. I desire to be your Lord; I desire to be your Savior.”

You say, “Well, I thirst after God.” Well, who made you to get thirsty? Do you think that, in the middle of the night, you wake up, and say, “Well, you know, I might be dehydrated. I'll go get a drink of water.” No, God put that thirst in you, and the reason we thirst after God is because God is seeking us.

### C. **A Saving Grace**

It is sovereign grace; it is seeking grace; and it is saving grace. Look, in chapter 2 and verse 11 of this chapter: *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation...”* (Titus 2:11). It is saving grace. The gospel is good news. It's not good news to me, if God were to tell me to straighten up, and do better, and maybe I can be saved—because I don't have what it takes to straighten up, and do better. And even if I could do better, I've already done so bad, that doing better won't undo what I have done. Salvation—salvation—is

not spelled *d-o*, and it's not spelled *d-o-n-apostrophe-t—don't*. It is spelled *d-o-n-e—done*. It is saving grace. Ephesians 2, verses 8 and 9: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast”* (Ephesians 2:8–9).

There won't be any peacocks in Heaven, nobody strutting down the streets of gold, saying, “Look what I did.” “Well,” you say, “Pastor, we're saved by grace and works.” Friend, you are 100% wrong, and your spiritual ignorance is showing. Listen to this verse, in Romans 11 and verse 6: *“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace”* (Romans 11:6)—if by grace, it is no more works. Otherwise, grace is no more grace. If you were to add any works to it, you destroy the principle of the grace of God. *“For by grace are ye saved”* (Ephesians 2:8). It is sovereign grace; it is seeking grace; and It is saving grace. Oh, hallelujah for that!

#### D. **A Securing Grace**

And it is securing grace. Go back to chapter 1, and look, if you will, in verse 2: *“In hope of eternal life...”*—now, the word *hope*, in the Bible, does not mean, “maybe it will happen”; it is bedrock assurance based on the Word of God. And the Second Coming of Jesus is called *the blessed hope*, and your eternal life is a blessed hope—*“In [the blessed] hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began”* (Titus 1:2). Listen. God chose you. God elected you. God planned your salvation, before this planet was swung into space.

Let me tell you about your salvation. Your salvation is not an ambulance brought to a wreck. It was in the heart and mind of God before anything ever, ever happened; before the world began. You talk about the old-time religion. Friend, that's pretty old time—before the world began. It is securing grace.

#### E. **A Satisfying Grace**

And I want to say this grace is also satisfying grace. Look, if you will, in chapter 1, again, and verse 4. He says here, in chapter 1 and verse 4: *“To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour”* (Titus 1:4). He links grace with mercy and peace. Isn't that a beautiful trinity? Grace, mercy, peace.

What is *grace*? Well, we already told you, grace is God giving us what we don't deserve. We don't deserve His goodness. *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). While we were sinners—no good, rotten, away from God, alienated, God-hating and God-fearing—God sent His grace to us. Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve; but mercy is God not giving to us what we do deserve. You see, what do we deserve? We deserve judgment; we deserve Hell.

So grace and mercy are linked together, and they're followed by peace. Mercy and peace—that's God's order. The Bible never said, "peace and grace," always "grace and peace," because you can't find peace until you know grace. You have the peace of God, and peace with God, because of the grace of God.

What is *peace*? Peace is the result of grace and mercy. When you know grace, when you receive mercy, then you will experience peace. Now on this threshold of a new year, there are people trying to find peace. Some of them are trying to find peace in a pill; others, in the bottom of a bottle. They're trying to drown their troubles, but their troubles can swim. Where are they going to find this peace? Peace is found in the grace and mercy of God.

What I'm trying to say is this: that this grace—the delight of grace is—it brings liberty. And let me give you a verse of Scripture taken from another book—Galatians chapter 5 and verse 1. Listen to it: "*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage*" (Galatians 5:1). The delight of grace is liberty.

## **II. The Denial of Grace Is Legalism**

Now let me tell you something else: The denial of grace is legalism. Every time the devil sees a trophy of grace, he will move in to tarnish that trophy. And that's the reason Paul is writing, here, to Titus.

Look now, if you will, in Titus, and look in verses 10 and 11—chapter 1, verses 10 and 11: "*For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake*" (Titus 1:10–11). That means, "dirty money." Now what's he talking about here? Well, I tell you, again, when the devil sees anybody celebrating liberty, when the devil sees anybody enjoying grace, he moves in to break up the party; and, whenever the devil sees a trophy of grace, he moves in to steal or to tarnish that trophy.

Now he speaks, here, of those of the circumcision, in verse 10 (Titus 1:10). What does that mean? Under the Jewish law, you have to be circumcised to show that you were a Jewish male, that you were in a covenant relationship—the household of faith. And there were Judaizers, who were saying to these Gentile believers, and others, "In order for you to be right with God, in order for you to be accepted by God, you have to put yourself back under the Jewish law." And they were legalists. The entire Book of Galatians was written to deal with this problem. They were endeavoring to put people back under the Mosaic Law. And Paul says, "Your liberty in Christ is worth fighting for." He says, "Their mouths must be stopped" (Titus 1:11). He called them *unruly*, because they didn't want to put themselves under the authority of the Word of God. He called

them *vain talkers*, because what they said was hot air. He called them *deceivers*, because they were in error. And he called them *subversive*; look, if you will—he says they “*subvert whole houses*” (Titus 1:11).

You know something about legalism? Babes in Christ are very susceptible to legalism. A man like myself can preach, “*Jesus Christ, and him crucified*” (1 Corinthians 2:2); can preach, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*” (Acts 16:31)—that you are saved by grace through faith, plus nothing—and these people will be saved. And then, along will come some legalist, some person who wants to lay down for those persons a lot of rules, and rituals, and laws; and, these people are so insecure in the liberty that they have in the Lord Jesus Christ that they will go back into the playpen of legalism, because they feel secure there. They will find some fellowship with somebody to lay down laws, to be legalistic and dictatorial. Friend, don’t you let anybody make a legalist out of you. You are not—you’re not—saved by keeping laws; you’re not saved by ritual. You’re not saved by anything other than the grace of God.

And a person who tries to be saved or sanctified by rules is like a person trying to get out of quicksand. The more he struggles, the more he sinks.

Now if you don’t hear anything else I say, dear friend—I’m talking about the amazing grace of God, and you come up close, and listen to me: Ten thousand rules will not make you one bit more like Jesus. Ten thousand rules will not make you one bit more like Jesus. We’re so much like the Pharisees; the only difference is, we just change the rules.

### III. The Distortion of Grace Is License

Now the delight of grace is liberty. The denial of grace is legalism. Final thing I want to say is, the distortion of grace is license. *Every road has two ditches, and the devil doesn’t care which side of the road he wrecks you on.* He doesn’t want you to stay on the road of grace; so, if he can get you off the road of grace and put you in the right-hand ditch of legalism, he’ll do it. And there you are, like the person struggling in quicksand, trying to get out. You have fallen away from grace.

Now if you won’t buy that, the devil will get you to distort the message that I’ve preached today; and, the distortion of this is license. What is *license*? License is the philosophy that says, “Well, I was really glad to hear what the preacher preached today. You know, the preacher said we’re saved by grace; we’re not saved by works. We’re just saved by the goodness of God. Therefore, I have a license to sin. I can just live anyway I like, do anything I want, and go to Heaven. Boy, boy, I’ve got my sin and Heaven too!” *You know, people, when they hear me talk about the grace of God, they say, “Well, man, if I believed that way, I’d get saved, then I’d sin all I want to.” Well, look up here, and let me tell you something: I can sin all I want to. I sin more than I*

*want to. I don't want to. And if you still want to, you need to get saved.* You've never been saved. You need to get your wanter fixed. No, you need a new wanter. You need to be born again.

## Conclusion

Now there's the grace of God, that saves us. And the devil would like to get you away from the delight of grace, which is liberty, into the denial of grace, which is legalism; or, into the distortion of grace, which is license. Put in your margin: "chapter 6, verses 1 and 2." Paul, there, in Romans, has been talking about the grace of God; and, Paul says, "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*" (Romans 6:1–2). When I got saved, something died within me. And I can tell you one of the ways that I know that I'm saved: Do I stumble? Yes. Do I fail? Yes. Am I weak? Yes. But in my heart, I died to sin. I became alive to the Lord Jesus Christ, by the grace of God. But I keep the law of God, because Jesus Christ is in my heart. I don't do it in order to be saved, but because I have been saved.

An old Indian, who had lived a wicked and a cruel life, was led to Christ by a missionary, and the old Indian had not had a lot of education—formal, theological, or any other kind. And somebody asked him to describe the grace of God. And you know what he did? He got a pile of leaves, put them together, then he caught a worm, and he put the worm in the middle of the leaves; and then, he took a match, and he lit the edges of that pile of leaves. And those leaves began to burn toward that worm; and, as the fire got close, the old Indian reached in his hand, and took that worm up gently in his hand, and held it up—out of the fire, and out of the flame. And he said, "*Me worm.*" Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a worm like me. "*Me worm.*"

Oh, friend, God reached down His hand of amazing grace, and rescued us. Isn't grace a wonderful thing? And it is seeking grace. God is seeking you, today. And God wants to save you, today. And God sent me here as His ambassador to tell you of amazing grace that can save you, cure you, satisfy you—the only thing that can.

Father, seal the message to our hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# Trophies of Grace

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** January 2, 1994

**Main Scripture Text:** Titus 1:1–4

*“Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.”*

TITUS 1:4

## Outline

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I. The Delight of Grace Is Liberty

- A. Sovereign Grace
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Conclusion

## Introduction

Would you take God’s Word and find the Book of Titus. It follows 2 Timothy. The Book of Titus: small book; big, big message. Now it is really a letter. It was a letter written to a man named Titus, by the Apostle Paul. And have you ever gotten a letter—a long letter—and you don’t know who wrote it? And you start to read a little while, and you read a little while; and then, you just stop, and you turn over to the back and see who signed it. And then, you go to read it again.

We in America—and in the Western world—generally begin our letters without saying who is writing them. Now the Apostle Paul had better sense than that, so he just introduces himself right here, at the very beginning of this letter. Look at it—Titus 1, verse 1: *“Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;”*—so, that’s who’s writing the letter: Paul. He says some things about himself, and gives his testimony. And then, he tells to whom he’s writing the letter—*“to Titus, mine own son after the common faith”* (Titus

1:1–4). Now what did he mean by that? Well, he didn't mean he was his literal son. Paul had led this young Greek to Christ. He was Paul's spiritual son. Paul was the spiritual daddy to Titus. *"Mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour"* (Titus 1:4). So it's a letter from Paul to Titus.

And the very first thing that he says to Titus is *"Grace"* (Titus 1:4). There's so much in this book about grace. You see grace there, in chapter 1, verse 4. Look in chapter 2, verse 11: *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men"* (Titus 2:11). Look in chapter 3, verse 7: *"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life"* (Titus 3:7). Look in chapter 3, verse 15: *"Grace be with you all. Amen"* (Titus 3:15). This is a book that is full of grace. And I've chosen it to talk to you, today, on this subject: *"God's Amazing Grace."*

Paul was so grateful for his son in the faith, Titus. As a matter of fact, Titus was to Paul a trophy of grace. And I've chosen that word carefully, because, when there was a conference in Jerusalem, and the conference subject was this: "Can the Gentiles be saved without keeping the Jewish law?" Paul took his young convert, Titus, to Jerusalem, and put him on display as a trophy of grace. You can read about it in Galatians chapter 2. And here's this young man who comes all the way to Jerusalem, a Greek; and, Paul says, "Look at him. There is a trophy of the grace of God"—which brings me to a question, right out: What kind of a trophy of grace are you? I mean, if I wanted to show the people of Memphis, Tennessee what the grace of God is like, and what the message I preach is like, could I take you down, and say, "Hey, this is what we're all about at Bellevue?" Would you be a trophy of grace? I mean, could I just reach out, and take you, and bring you down, and say, "This is what we are talking about; this is a trophy of grace?" You see, not only should we be witnesses; we ought to be part of the evidence—we ought to be part of the evidence. This young man was so saved by the grace of God that Paul could take him all the way to Jerusalem, and say, "Just look at Titus."

That brings me to another question, also. Paul called Titus his son—his son in the faith. Do you have any children in the faith? Can you look at someone, and say, "There is somebody I have led to Jesus Christ? There is my son. There is my daughter. I am a spiritual father. I am their spiritual mother. This is somebody that I have led to Christ." As a matter of fact, not only did Paul have sons and daughters in the faith; he had grandchildren, because he's led Titus to Christ, and Titus led others who'd led others. Paul was a great-great-great-grandfather. And you know, I'm kind of a great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, because I have people that I've led to Christ, who've led others to Christ, who're leading others to Christ. Won't it be a day when we get to Heaven and see those whose lives we have touched by bringing souls to Jesus Christ?

In 1855, on April 21, there was a man named Kimball—Mr. Kimball. He had on his heart a young man who was a shoe salesman, who was 19 years of age. Mr. Kimball felt that he ought to tell this shoe salesman about Jesus Christ. So he went to where the shoe salesman worked, and went back there, in the shoe racks, laid a trembling hand on the shoulder of this young man, whose name was Dwight, and told Dwight of the grace of God. And Dwight bowed his head, back there, in the shoe racks, and was saved. Now Dwight was so saved that he wanted to share his salvation; and so, the only way he knew to do it—he wasn't educated; he didn't have a college degree, certainly had not been to seminary—but he felt he could tell boys and girls about Jesus Christ, so he began there, in the city of Chicago, some Sunday Schools. And he was very proficient, very well organized, and very convictional; and, children, by the hundreds, and then thousands, began to come and get saved. This man began to preach, and he would preach around Chicago, and around America. His name: Dwight L. Moody.

Oh, he was a powerful man for God—so powerful that they invited him to England to preach. And so Dwight L. Moody went to England, and he was invited to the church pastored by a man named F. B. Meyer. The man had an imposing name, really: Frederick Brotherton Meyer. And he was a very erudite and cultured British man. And he thought it would be nice to have the American to come; but, when the American got there, and began to speak, Meyer felt he'd made a tragic mistake. He wasn't cultured at all, and he murdered the King's English. Now he didn't disappoint the King of kings, but he murdered the King's English. It was said of Dwight L. Moody that he was the only man living who could pronounce *Jerusalem* in two syllables, but he would. And he was full of fire, and he told what we would call, today, a *tear-jerking* story about a Sunday School teacher who learned that he was going to die, and that teacher, before he died, led all of his pupils in his class to Jesus Christ. Meyer was sitting on the platform thinking, "Oh, oh, when will this end? When will he be finished? What a mistake I've made!" It was an ordeal for Meyer to listen to Moody. But finally, Moody finished.

Later, F. B. Meyer was having tea with one of the church ladies, and he said to her, "And how goes it with you today, madam?" She said, "Wonderful, Brother Meyer. Since Moody has been here, I have won every girl in my class to Jesus Christ." That stung F. B. Meyer. He said, "I learned that day something of the language of the soul, and my life was touched by that American, Dwight L. Moody." He said, "I have never been the same, because of what Moody did in our church."

F. B. Meyer, with a heart aflame for God, came to the United States. And he was preaching in a college in the United States, and in that college were some ministerial students. And F. B. Meyer was talking about making a full surrender to God, giving God everything. And then, he said this poignant thing—he said, "There are some of you who

are ready to quit. There are some of you who are not willing to give everything to Jesus Christ, and you don't seem to have the strength to live for Him." But he said, "If you cannot tell God that you're willing to give Him everything, would you tell God this: 'O God, I am not willing, but I am willing to be made willing.'" That's interesting: "I'm not willing, but I'm willing to be made willing." That means, "God, start with me where I am. I am weak, yes, Lord; but start with me." And you know that Scripture: "*For*"—the Bible says—"*it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*" (Philippians 2:13). "O God, I want to be willing. I give You my will. Work in me, O God."

Sitting out there was a young man. His name was Wilbur Chapman. Wilbur Chapman said, "O God, that's me. I've been ready to quit. But God, I am willing to be made willing. Work in my heart." And God began to work in the heart of Wilbur Chapman, and Wilbur Chapman was touched by God, and anointed, became a mighty evangelist used of God across America, and throughout the land.

Wilbur Chapman needed a helper, and he looked around; and, he found a young ex-professional baseball player, who was now a YMCA clerk. His name: William A. Sunday—Billy Sunday—one of the world-renowned evangelists who was to his day what Billy Graham is to our day. And he asked Sunday to come help him. Sunday would put up and take down the tent, put out the chairs, sometimes do the counseling. And on occasions, Sunday would give his testimony about how God had saved him from alcohol, and God had saved him from vice; and, Sunday would testify as to what God had done for him, because Sunday was gloriously saved. After Chapman was old, he said, "Billy, I'm going to turn this ministry over to you." And he turned it all over to Billy Sunday. That's how Billy Sunday got his start. And Billy Sunday preached across America. And God so anointed Billy Sunday. It is said that he brought over a million souls to Jesus Christ—greatly anointed.

Billy Sunday would do all kinds of weird, strange things, but God had his hand on him. In 1924, Billy Sunday came to Charlotte, North Carolina; and there, he preached a great revival crusade. And Heaven came down, and God blessed them, and there was true, real revival in Charlotte, North Carolina. Out of that revival meeting, there came a group of men who banded together to pray for the world. It was called the Charlotte Prayer Meeting. They met regularly to pray for Charlotte, and to pray for the world. And the focus of their prayer was this: "O God, send another revival to Charlotte that will shape Charlotte, and shake the world for Jesus Christ." They prayed faithfully for a decade, and God sent another evangelist to Charlotte, North Carolina. His name: Mordecai Ham. Both Billy Sunday and Mordecai Ham have preached in this city, by the way. Mordecai Ham, an evangelist with long white flowing hair, came and preached in Charlotte, in 1934, and many came to Christ.

Sitting out there, in the audience, when Mordecai Ham was preaching, was a young

lanky 15-year-old farm boy, a North Carolina farm boy. That bony finger of Mordecai Ham pointing out like that made that farm boy a little uncomfortable; so, he thought, “Maybe I’ll get in the choir; it won’t be as bad up there.” You know, that’s why these folks are up there, this morning; they’re trying to hide. And so he—this boy—got up there, in the choir; but, the finger of God found him up there. His name was Billy, also—Billy Graham. Billy Graham gave his heart to Jesus Christ in that revival crusade in Charlotte, North Carolina, preached by Mordecai Ham; and, only eternity will be able to measure the souls and the lives that have been impacted by this wonderful and marvelous grand man of God, Billy Graham.

But if you think there’s an unbroken thread that goes all the way from Graham to Mordecai Ham, to Billy Sunday, to Wilbur Chapman, to F. B. Meyer, to Dwight L. Moody, to who? Do you still remember his name? Mr. Kimball. Now we’ve heard of Graham; and we’ve heard of Meyer; and we’ve heard of Sunday; and we’ve heard of Ham; and we’ve heard of Chapman. Few of us have heard of this man named Kimball. But I’ll tell you, Heaven has his name—Heaven has his name. Friend, you never know what you start in motion, when you win somebody to Jesus Christ. And you may never be heard of; but, think about who you may be leading to Jesus Christ.

Paul said, “You are my son.” And here, this boy—he didn’t know when he won this little old Greek boy to Christ that he would be Titus, the man that he would leave there to take care of the whole island of Crete, and to supervise the work of God there. We never know who it is that we’re bringing to Jesus Christ.

So again, those two questions: If you were a trophy of grace, what kind of trophy would you be? Number two: Do you have any trophies of grace? In your spiritual hallway, are there some trophies of grace? Are there some people that you could say, “Yes, I led him to Jesus Christ; yes, I had the joy of bringing that person to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.” With what joy the Apostle Paul wrote this letter to Titus, “mine own son in the faith” (Titus 1:4).

Now he’s talking about the grace of God in this book. It was *grace* that was his first word to Titus—grace, amazing grace. What is *grace*? What is *grace*? Grace is the unmerited, unearned favor and love of God that is freely bestowed upon us, where there is no merit whatsoever. Grace—we put it this way: *g-r-a-c-e*; here’s an acrostic: *God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense—g-r-a-c-e*. “Amazing grace! How sweet the sound.”

There are three things I want us to learn about grace, today. First of all, I want us to think of the delight of grace; and then, I want us to think of the denial of grace; and then, the distortion of grace.

## **I. The Delight of Grace Is Liberty**

But first of all, let’s talk about the delight of grace. And do you know what the delight of

grace is? It's liberty. Oh, when you understand grace, when you understand the grace of God, then you begin to live in liberty and freedom! There is nothing that will set you free like the grace of God, for Jesus Christ came to set you free. And the Bible says, *"If the Son...shall make you free, you shall be free indeed"* (John 8:36). And the Apostle Paul says, *"Stand fast...in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free"* (Galatians 5:1).

So what is the delight of grace? It is liberty. Now let's just study this grace, and see what kind of grace it is that liberates us.

#### A. **Sovereign Grace**

First of all, it's sovereign grace. Look, if you will, in verse 1: *"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect"* (Titus 1:1)—*God's elect*. It is God who elects us, who chooses us, who sets us apart for salvation. Did you know that God had His eye on you a long time before you had your eye on Him? Did you know that? Did you know that, if you're saved, it is because God has chosen you to be saved? You say, "Well, that brings up a problem, if I'm not yet saved. What if God hasn't chosen me? Can I be saved, if I'm not one of the elect?" Well, I've got wonderful news for you. In John chapter 6, Jesus says this: "All that the Father hath given me will come to me" (John 6:37). That's sovereign election: "All that the Father hath given me will come to me" (John 6:37). Hallelujah! They will come.

And then, he said, *"And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"* (John 6:37). You want to be one of the elect? Just come on. Isn't that neat? Just come on. If you want to come, just come. I can stand up here, and I can preach, today, "Whosoever will, may come." Isn't that wonderful? So you want to find out whether you're the elect? You want to be saved? Just come on. Don't let election keep you out; let it bring you in. But know this: that God set His heart, His mind, upon you—the omniscient, all-knowing God. It is sovereign grace that saves us.

#### B. **Seeking Grace**

And not only is it sovereign grace; because it's sovereign grace, it must be seeking grace. You see, we love Him, because He loved us first. The Bible says, in the Book of Romans, *"There is none that seeketh after God"* (Romans 3:11). You say, "Well, I sought Him." The only reason you sought Him is because He first sought you.

When I was in the sixth grade, I looked over at a little girl. As I remember, it was two rows of desks over, and about six seats up. And I saw her sitting over there. I was sitting back over here. I liked what I saw, and I wrote a love note to Joyce Louis Gentry, walked past her desk, and dropped it. She's now Joyce Louis Rogers; she is my bride, and my beloved. I wrote that note and dropped it. Do you know, we still have that note? She still has it. It made an impression. It must have been good. She still has that note.

You know, from that time on, she began to take an interest in me. Do you know why she loves me? I first loved her. Do you know what the Bible is? It's God's love letter to you. It is God saying to you, "I have set my eye upon you. I love you."

It is seeking grace. It's not by accident that you're here today. This message is God seeking you. The songs are God seeking you. That stirring that you feel in your heart—that's God seeking you.

### C. **Saving Grace**

It is sovereign grace; it is seeking grace; and it is saving grace. Look, in chapter 2, verse 11: "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation...*" (Titus 2:11). "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation...*" (Titus 2:11). Look in verse 7: "*That being justified by his grace...*" (Titus 3:7). It is saving grace. Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8 and 9: "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God*" (Ephesians 2:8). You're not saved by doing good works. You're not saved by joining a church. You're not saved by giving your money. You are saved by the grace of God. God just saved you, when you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now every now and then, there will come along some legalist who will try to mix in grace and works. You can't mix grace and works. We are saved by grace alone, by faith only, plus nothing. Romans 11, verse 6: "*And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work*" (Romans 11:6). What does that verse say it means? You can't mix grace and works. You just can't do it. You are saved by grace—by grace, by grace. Say *amen*. Get it in your heart: It is sovereign grace. It is seeking grace. It is saving grace. Don't ever try to mix grace and works. Don't ever think that you're saved by His grace, and your works. That is impossible. You are saved by the grace of God; and therefore, you'll never be able to boast. But for eternity, you will praise. You will praise Him that He has saved you by His grace.

### D. **Securing Grace**

And since it is saving grace, it is securing grace. You see, how do I keep saved? Well, if I got saved by works, I'd have to keep saved by works. But if I'm saved by grace, then I'm kept by grace. Look, in verse 2: "*In the hope of*"—what kind of life?—"eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). Talk about old-time religion! Now folks, that is old-time religion: before the world began, eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, has promised (Titus 1:2). Now God gave me eternal life. If I ever lose it, whatever I had wasn't eternal.

Suppose I was saved for 10 years, and then I lost it. What did I have? Ten-year life. Suppose I kept it 50 years and then lost it. What did I have? Fifty-year life. But God cannot lie, and God says, "*Eternal life*" (Titus 1:2). You say, "Well, Pastor Rogers, you'll

get eternal life, when you die.” No, I got it, when I believed. Listen. The Bible says— Jesus speaking: “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life*”—not, *will get—has—*everlasting life—“*and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life*” (John 5:24). This grace—it’s sovereign. This grace—it’s seeking grace. This grace—it is saving grace. This grace—it is securing. You’re saved by grace. You’re kept by grace. God cannot lie.

#### E. **Satisfying Grace**

And it is satisfying grace. Look, if you will again, here, in verse 4. Now he says here, to young Titus, “*To Titus, mine own son in the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus our Saviour*” (Titus 1:4). Isn’t that what you want? Isn’t that what you want? Grace, mercy, and peace—isn’t that a trinity of blessings? Do you know what *grace* is? *Grace* is God giving us what we don’t deserve—that’s eternal life. Do you know what *mercy* is? *Mercy* is God not giving us what we do deserve—that’s judgment and Hell. Do you know what *peace* is? *Peace* is the result of receiving what we don’t deserve, and not receiving what we do deserve—that’s peace. See, that’s it: grace, mercy, and peace.

Where are you going to find peace? Where is peace? You think it’s in a pill? You think you’re going to divorce your wife, and marry somebody else? Do you think if you could get another car, a bigger house? Do you think maybe you can find peace at the bottom of a bottle? Do you think you can drown your problems? Your problems can swim, mister. Where is peace? It’s in the grace of God. Where’s mercy? It’s in the grace of God. Have you ever noticed the order? “*Grace, mercy, and peace*” (Titus 1:4). Not, “Peace, mercy, and grace.” Grace always comes first. The Bible never says “peace and grace”; always “grace and peace.” You will never know peace, until you know the grace of God. You will never have satisfaction, apart from the grace of God.

*Friends all around me are trying to find  
What the heart yearns for, by sin undermined;  
I have the secret; I know where 'tis found:  
Only true pleasures in Jesus abound.*

—HARRY D. LOES

It is the grace of God that your heart needs. It is delightful. It is liberating. When you understand, “O God, I am not saved by works. I’m not saved by being good. I don’t deserve it, but I receive it. Hallelujah!

*Oh! to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I’m constrained to be!*

—ROBERT ROBINSON

Now that’s the delight of grace.

## II. The Denial of Grace Is Legalism

But the devil doesn't want you to have trophies of grace, or to be a trophy of grace. So what the devil will try to do is to steal the trophy, or tarnish the trophy. So there is (a) the delight of grace—that's liberty; there is (b) the denial of grace, and that is legalism.

*Anytime the devil sees anybody celebrating grace, he'll move in to break up the party.*

Any time the devil sees a trophy of grace, he will breathe his foul breath on it to tarnish the trophy.

So look, if you will, in verse 5. Paul says, *"For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting"* (Titus 1:5). There was a problem in Crete. What was the problem in Crete? Well, there were some legalizers who came in there; some Judaizers who came in there. Look, in verse 10: *"For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision"* (Titus 1:10).

Now what does he mean by that? Well, there were certain people who said, "These Gentiles cannot be saved, unless they begin to keep the Old Testament laws. And unless they obey the rules and the rituals of the Old Testament, they cannot be saved." They were called *the circumcision*, because they required all to be circumcised, if they wanted to come into Judaism, if they wanted to come into the legalism of the Law, and the Mosaic system. And this was the initiation. So they call them *the circumcision*. And what it was, was legalism. Now there, the devil would like to get you away from grace, and he'd like to get you into legalism. And there are so many people today who once enjoyed grace, and now, they have been pulled off into legalism.

Do you know what happens? A person like myself can stand up here, and preach the grace of God—preach that we're justified freely by His grace, as this book clearly teaches us—and there are some who just cannot handle that much liberty. I mean, to be free in the Lord Jesus Christ—they just can't handle it. And so there will come in some teacher; and, this verse says—verses 10 and 11: they *"subvert whole houses"* (Titus 1:11). What they do is, they say, "Now look. Pastor Rogers over there, he hasn't told you about these rules. He hasn't told you about these rituals. He hasn't told you about these regulations. And he just hasn't cut it sharply enough. You need to come over here, and listen to me. Let me put you under bondage, and I will be the authority. I will be the ruler in your life, and I will tell you (a), and (b), and (c), and (d). I will tell you 'don't do this' and 'don't do that.' And I will lay down laws for you. And you can leave your liberty in Christ, and crawl back into the playpen—fall away from grace."

And you know, that's attractive to some people. They put themselves under the bondage of legalism. Don't you ever let anybody steal your joy in Jesus. Listen. It's worth fighting for. Paul says, *"Rebuke them sharply"* (Titus 1:13). Worth fighting for—your liberty is worth fighting for, standing for. You read Galatians chapter 5, verse 1. Paul says, *"Stand fast...in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free"* (Galatians

5:1). Don't let anybody take away your liberty in Christ. Don't let anybody get you out from underneath this amazing grace—amazing grace.

### III. The Distortion of Grace Is License

And so there is the delight of grace; and then, there is the denial of grace. Over here, on the right-hand side, is the denial of grace—that's legalism. Then, there is, over here, on the left-hand side, the distortion of grace; and, that is license. Liberty, legalism, license.

Now there are some who are listening to me, saying, "You know, Pastor, I've been waiting to hear a message like you preach for a long time. Thank God, I'm not saved by works! Thank God, I'm not saved by giving! Thank God, I'm not saved by straight living! Hallelujah! Wonderful! Now I'll just go down there, get saved, get baptized. I'll just live any way I like. I've got it made. I can go to Heaven, and live like the devil. Isn't grace wonderful?" Some people will believe that. That's a distortion of grace.

People say, "Well, you know, if I believed in grace like you preach it, Preacher, I'd just get saved, and sin all I want to." Well, I want to tell you something: I sin all I want to. I sin more than I want to. I don't want to. I'm not perfect, but I tell you one thing: When I gave my heart to Jesus, that old man died; and, from the moment I gave my heart to Jesus, there's a desire to live for Him. Verse 1 tells us that it is godliness: "*The truth which is after godliness*" (Titus 1:1). You see, when God saves you, He changes you on the inside by His grace. And the Bible, and the grace of God, teach that we will be changed.

Look, if you will, in Titus chapter 2 and verse 11: "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*" (Titus 2:11–12). And the Apostle Paul, dealing with the subject, says, in Romans chapter 6, verses 1 and 2: "*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*" (Romans 6:1–2). That's license. Salvation by grace is not a license to sin. It's not saying, "Well, I'm saved. Now I'll live it up, live any way I want," because the grace of God, when it comes into your heart, changes you from the inside. There's an easy-believism, a cheap grace, that says, "Well, I just believe in Jesus. I'll live it however I want, and I'll go to Heaven." There are people who are living in adultery; and, you challenge them about it, and they say, "Oh well, the grace of God, the grace of God." Friend, those folks need to be saved.

*"Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate...shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you"* (1 Corinthians 6:9–11)—not, "Such are some of you"—"*Such were some of you.*" What is the difference between *cheap grace* and *true grace*? *Cheap grace justifies the sin; true*

*grace justifies the sinner*—that’s the difference. True grace—true grace—just changes you on the inside. The difference is not primarily in *what* you do. The difference, primarily, is *why* you do it—because of the grace of God.

*I cannot work my soul to save;  
That work my Lord has done.  
But I will work like any slave,  
For the love of God’s dear Son.*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

And see, there’s the liberty that’s in Christ. On the right-hand side, there’s the ditch of legalism. On the left-hand side, there’s the ditch of license. But on the highway of holiness, there is liberty in Christ. The denial of legalism, the distortion of license, but oh, the glory of the grace of God.

## Conclusion

You know what my message for you, today, is? That God’s grace is simply amazing. He will save you, today, as a sheer gift. There is nothing you can earn. You just receive the gift of God, and He will save you.

An old Indian had lived a wicked and an ungodly life. He was a pagan, and a missionary came, and led him to Christ. And the old Indian was truly saved. He didn’t know a lot of theology, but brother, he knew God. Somebody asked the old Indian, “Describe what happened to you.” You know what he did? He got a pile of dry leaves, and piled them together, then found a worm, and put that worm in the middle of those dry leaves. And then, with a match, he set those leaves on fire all around that worm, and the fire and the smoke began to burn toward that worm. And then, the old Indian reached in, with his big hand, and tenderly lifted that worm out of the fire, and pointed to him, and said, “Me: worm.” Oh, that’s the grace of God.

Friend, we’re the ones that deserve judgment and the fires of Hell, but God and His hand of grace and love, with tender mercies, He lifted me. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a worm like me, and a worm like you! And He’ll save you, today, by His wonderful, wonderful, amazing grace. And you can be, for His glory, a trophy of grace.

Father, seal the message to our hearts. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

# God's Pattern for a Pastor

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: November 29, 2000**

**Main Scripture Text: Titus 1:4–14**

*“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”*

TITUS 1:9

## Outline

Introduction

- I. Blameless at Home
- II. Blameless in His Personal Life
- III. Blameless in His Pastoral Life

Conclusion

## Introduction

Take your Bibles and find the Book of Titus back toward the back of the New Testament. Since we are going to have an ordination tonight, we are going to study in the Word of God what God's Word says about a pastor, a preacher. The title of the message tonight is "God's Pattern for a Pastor." Now, what we have in the book of Titus is Paul, who is writing a letter to a young Les Helton. He is writing a letter to a preacher-boy. Paul had won Titus to Jesus Christ, and, as a matter of fact, had steered his life and helped him to go to that particular place where he was to be a minister. And what Paul is telling Titus is this: if you have going to be a preacher, be a good one and stand fast, don't waver, because he was going to a very hard place.

*A little boy had an old horse, more of a nag than a steed. A man was making fun of the boy's horse, and he said, "Son, can he run fast?" He said, "No sir, but he can stand fast." Now, what we need are some preachers who can stand fast.*

Now, Titus had his pastorate in a place called Crete. Now, Crete was an island off the coast of Greece, a narrow island; it had a ridge of mountains running through it. It was occupied primarily by fisherman and people who were not well educated. It was perhaps what we could call today the backwoods, although it was an island itself.

Titus was a little discouraged. He was having some tough times. The ministry is not always easy. I have been in ministry long enough to know that sometimes you can get in difficult times and sometimes tough times. If you are not sure that you are called of God, and if you are not sure that God has placed you where you are, you might want to

go back. You might want to get out of that situation. That is not just true about the ministry. You can be in a difficult job. You can be in a difficult marriage. You can be in some sort of a situation where you say, “Now, God, get me out of this.”

Now, what Paul is doing, Les and people, he is writing to Titus, and saying, “Titus, bloom where you are planted. Stay where God has put you until God moves you, and understand that the situation is not what is going to give you joy and happiness. To rejoice is a choice that you can make anywhere.”

I learned that when I came here. Almost 30 years ago, you people extracted me from Florida. I was down in Florida, happily pastoring a church. Joyce and I were there when the Bellevue Pulpit Committee intercepted us. We went through an agonizing time trying to ascertain the will of God for our lives. We felt that God wanted us to come here, and so we came. We came in the fall of the year, in September. It began to rain, and it rained everyday, everyday, everyday. It rained for a week. It rained for a month. It rained for another month. It rained for another month. Everyday it rained. It began to get dark at 4:30. I walked out of the office one day at 4:30, ready to go, and it was dark. I said, “What has happened? Where did the day go?”

And upon a time, Brother Morris Mills, I was driving out of my driveway early in the morning to get down to the old building downtown, and there was ice and snow on the ground. I had never seen snow. Well, I had seen it in books. The first time I saw snow on the ground I thought it was grits all over the ground. I was driving a car, and there was a little layer of ice there. Moving in a strange car, in a strange community, driving on strange precipitation, and I went around a corner, and the car just slid up against the curb. I put it in gear, and pushed on the wheel, and it just went zzzzzz and never moved. I tried again: zzzzzz, and never moved. I sat there. I looked around, and there were no leaves on the trees. The sun was not shining. I thought, “This is not my car. This is not my neighborhood. This is not my house. This is not my church. I don’t like it.”

God spoke to me that day. God said, “Didn’t you say you believed that I called you here?” “Yes sir.” “Don’t you believe you are in the will of God? Are you where I put you?” “Yes sir.” “Then why do you say you don’t like it? Shame on you.” And I said, “You are right, Lord. I choose to like it. I choose to like it. I will like it. I choose to rejoice.” And from that time on, I have. It was just as simple as that.

You can choose your emotions like you can choose your friends. *To rejoice is a choice.* If it is not a choice, why does God tell us to rejoice, if we are simply victims of whatever may be around us? In any circumstance, you can rejoice.

Now, here was Titus, and he was wondering, “Am I really where God put me?” And so Paul is writing to him. Let us go down to verse 4—Paul, “*To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in*

*order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless...*—now, he is going to give the requirement for an elder, or pastor, or bishop—*“if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;”*—that is euphemism for money—*“but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:”*—he is talking there, when he says the circumcision, he is talking about the Jewish community there—*“whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, the Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.”* In plain English, that means idle gluttons. *“This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith: not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth”* (Titus 1:4–14). I am going to stop reading there. There is so much more that I could read, but this is what Paul is saying that a minister ought to be.

Now, he says, “Titus, I sent you there for several reasons.” Look, if you will, in verse 5—he says, *“For this cause I left thee in Crete.”* Now, for what reasons did he leave Titus in Crete? Well, number one: he wanted him to set things in order that were not in order. “To set in order,” he says. The word to set in order literally means to mend a bone, to put in place a bone that is broken. It is a metaphor that sometimes churches can be broken. Sometimes churches can have problems. One of the pastor’s requirements is to be a spiritual physician in orthopedics who can put things together. He is to be a mender of things. So he is to, with tender loving care, care for the flock. And when things are out of order, he is to put things in order. Verse 5: *“that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting.”*

Number two: he says, “Titus, I am sending you down there to ordain elders, to do for others what I did for you”—what we are going to do for Les tonight. A good preacher is one who reproduces himself. One of my greatest joys that I have as being the pastor of this church is to ordain young men like Les, and others, and send them out. Folks, we have them all over the world preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, here and on the mission field. That is one of the marks of God’s hand upon a church. You ought to rejoice every time we come to an ordination service. What a joy that is when we can replicate ourselves!

Now, to appoint elders; that is what he says—to ordain elders. What is an elder? An elder is a pastor. Have you ever been around a church where they call their pastor Elder

So-and-So? Well, you can call me Elder So-and-So. It doesn't mean that you mean that I am an old man. An elder speaks of someone with spiritual maturity. Timothy was an elder, but he was a young man. Titus, we believe, was a young man, but he was an elder. Paul told Timothy, who was an elder, "*Let no man despise [your] youth*" (1 Timothy 4:12). An elder is not somebody who has attained many years chronologically. An elder is somebody who has spiritual maturity.

The young man who came up here and gave his testimony tonight, he has not been saved very long, but he is becoming spiritually mature very quickly. I am so grateful for that. Now, and also, he is called a bishop. Look in verse 7. He is using the word *bishop* and *elder* interchangeably. Verse 7: "*For a bishop must be blameless.*" The word *bishop* comes from the Greek word *episkopos*, which means an overseer. A man for the ministry is to be a man that has maturity and management. A preacher has to be able to do more than preach the Word of God. He has to oversee or look over the flock. He has to be a man spiritually wise enough and astute enough to do that.

Now, I want to talk to you therefore about the kind of leadership that churches need—this church, Calvary Baptist in Shreveport, any other church. Now, I am going to be speaking to Les. In telling you what God said to Titus, and what God says to Les, what God says to Adrian, to Mark, and to Jim. Does that mean that God expects more of the minister than He does the laity? No. The standard for a Christian is the same for everybody. What God is saying, however, is that, if you are to lead, you are to be one that meets the standard. It is not saying that those who are not ministers have a lower standard. What it is saying is those who are ministers are to meet the standard that every Christian really should meet. That is what he is saying. So don't think that you are hoping that Les can live it to this. Because everything that I am going to say to Les will apply to you, so far as your Christian morals, conduct, and standard is concerned.

Look, if you will, in verse 6: "*If any be blameless...*" Now, a minister is to be blameless. It doesn't mean that he is to be sinless, because all have sinned. If any man says that he has not sinned, the Apostle John says he is a liar. This does not mean sinless; it means blameless. It means that nobody can point a finger of accusation at him and say that there is something in his life that is not right, that is wrong, something that needs to be set in order. It means that the man of God ought to so live that no charge can be made against him. Well, you say, "Pastor, then I am going to look you over and see if there is some charge that I can make against you." Remember what I told you. It would be far better for you to go look in mirror and see if some charge can be made against you. This is not saying that a minister is held to a higher standard. It is saying that a minister is one who should meet the standard that every Christian should be held to. No one should purport to lead who does not live what he preaches and preach what he lives.

So many times I have young preachers come to me, it is almost amusing—Joyce laughs at it—at a convention or somewhere. They will come up, and they will say, “Pastor Rogers, I have just been called into the ministry,” or “I am at my first church.” “Would you give me a word, would you give me something that will help me in my ministry?” Like passing in the hallway I can just give some incredible something, some memorable thing, but I have pretty well distilled it down. So, if they want a word, I give them a word. I will tell you what that one word is: it is integrity—integrity.

Integrity in doctrine, integrity in morals, integrity in home life, integrity in business life, but integrity; it is just another word for saying blameless. You are to live with integrity. Now, there are three areas of integrity that Paul pointed out to young Titus. You stay there in Crete. Don’t throw in the towel. Don’t let up, and don’t back up, but have integrity in these three areas; be blameless in these three areas.

## I. Blameless at Home

Number one: at home—at home. The minister needs integrity in his home life. Notice verse 6: *“If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.”* Spiritual leadership begins at home. If the pastor cannot lead at home, he should not try to stand behind a pulpit and export what he is not doing at home.

He is to be a man of God in relationship to his wife. Look at it again: having one wife, *“the husband of one wife.”* What this literally means is that he is to be a one-womaned man, or a one-woman man. He has eyes for his wife and his wife alone. You know, people can tell whether or not you are a one-woman man.

I had a preacher one time say to me, “Adrian, do you have women coming on to you all the time?” I said, “No.” He said, “Well, I do. What do you do about it? What should I do about it?” I really didn’t tell him everything I thought, but here is what I thought: “You are sending out some kinds of signals.” A man of God ought to be so holy that women would be afraid of him, afraid of him in that manner. There ought to be no hint but that he is a man of one woman.

And may God give us more preachers who are like that, and more laymen. Don’t get the idea that, oh yes, that is the way a preacher ought to be. Bud, that is the way you ought to be: a one-woman man married to your own wife. As a matter of fact, Peter says to all of us, *“Ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, as being heirs together of the grace of life”* (1 Peter 3:7). Your wife is a part of your ministry. Joyce is a part of my ministry. Lisa is a part of your ministry. God has put you together.

And you are also to give leadership to your children. Notice it says, *“having faithful children.”* I so appreciate the Helton children, their countenance, the way they are a part

of their father's ministry. I make no apology for putting my family before this church, for putting my wife before this church. You can always get another pastor. I have got one wife, and I am going to keep her all of my life.

Now, I don't say that arrogantly, but my chief responsibility, and your chief responsibility, as a bishop is to the family, to the home. Your home will preach as much as any message that you will ever preach behind a pulpit or on the ball field or any place else. Like Noah, who got his children into the ark, we are to get our children into the ark. Now, no man, be he a preacher or anybody else, can control his children. A pastor can have children that will break his heart. You can have children that will break your heart and still be blameless, but you are to lead your family as a man of God. You are to have integrity in the home.

Les, I just want to give you three or four things, and I give this to all of us the way to do that. Number one: be an example. Don't preach one thing and live something else. I have four children who all love God. They are not perfect kids, because they had to play with the deacon's kids. But I don't stutter to say, and I am not ashamed to say, nor afraid to say, that all four of our kids know their parents are not hypocrites. They know we are not one thing at church and another thing at home. Be an example.

Have family worship. That is so hard to do today. Have a family altar. Take time. Sometimes it is a hassle. Sometimes we used to have family worship, and I felt like we needed to worship more after we had family worship than we did when we got started. But do it. It is worth it. Be creative. Make certain that your children are in the house of God. I am not just talking about dragging them to church. Make church the most exciting part of their life, and you be enthusiastic about it. Let them love the house the God. Get them in a good Sunday School class under a godly teacher, and tie them, lash them, to the throne of God in prayer. Our children are grown, but Joyce and I still pray for them by name every day, every one, and for our grandchildren. Just tie them to the throne of God in prayer. The man of God needs to be blameless in his family life—not sinless, not perfect; none is sinless, none is perfect; but don't be blameworthy.

## **II. Blameless in His Personal Life**

Number two: he is to be blameless in his personal life. Begin now in verse 7: *“For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God.”* And then, he mentions some characteristics that he is to have. Number one: he is not to be self-willed. Do you know what *self-willed* means? It means self-pleasing, living for yourself rather than for the good of all. If you want to live for yourself, don't get in the ministry. *“Not self-willed, not soon angry”*: *soon angry* means somebody who loses his temper, with a hairline temper. Temper is such a good thing; that is the reason you ought not to lose it. A minister who does not have temper, there is something wrong with him. If there are some things that

don't move you to anger, you are different than Jesus. Jesus was moved with anger when He saw the weak exploited, when He saw the house of God made into a den of thieves. The book of Ephesians says, "*Be...angry, and sin not*" (Ephesians 4:26). Do you know the only way to be angry and sin not is to only be angry at sin? But have your temper in control—not soon angry, not flying off the handle. Many a pastor has forfeited his ministry, or hurt his ministry, by not being able to control his temper.

"*Not given to wine.*" By the way, I am preparing a sermon I am going to preach Sunday on alcohol: "The Bible and Beverage Alcohol." You know, the liquor dealers are gearing up to make a killing this season. And friend, 'tis the season to be sober. Not given to wine—enough said there.

No striker. What does that mean? The word striker, literally, the Greek word, means ready to wound. Don't be trying to hurt somebody. Sometimes people use the pulpit as a place to unload on people. There is no place for that. I have found out that in the pulpit you can say almost anything you want to say, no matter how hard it is, if it comes out of the Word of God and the people know you love them. It may hurt, but the pulpit, the ministry, is no place for a person who has a desire to wound, or who wants to be a bully.

Not given to filthy lucre. What that literally means is that he is not a moneygrubber. That is what the *New English Bible* says; that is the translation of it: not a moneygrubber. Of course, the pastor ought to be paid. The Bible says the elder that rules well is "*worthy of double honour*" (1 Timothy 5:17), like an honorarium. There is nothing wrong with that. I am so grateful that this church cares for our family in a very wonderful way. And I hope that the Calvary Baptist Church will take care of this man, for the ministry is the highest calling; it is the worst profession. No one should ever enter the ministry for gain.

Now, those are negative things. He mentions some positive things. Look in verse 8: "*But a lover of hospitality.*" That means he enjoys guests. He loves people. You can't be in the ministry without loving people. You can't be Spirit-filled without loving people. By nature, I don't think I would love people. If Jesus had not saved me and filled me with the Holy Spirit, I would want just a few friends, and the rest of the people could buzz off. Hey, that is the way I am by nature. But I can tell you that, since Jesus came into my heart, I love people; not just in the abstract, but, really, I love people. That is the supernatural work of God. But it is a chief requirement for a man of God. He is to be "*a lover of hospitality*" and "*a lover of good men.*" Now, actually, what this verse says is a lover of all that is good; it goes beyond men. Of course, he is just to love that which is pure and just.

He is to be "*sober.*" It is not talking here about alcohol. It means he is to be sane and sensible. I hear churches, sometimes pastors, talk about these people, these people, these people, and he himself is a ninny. He doesn't have good sense. He doesn't think

straight. He is not sober-minded. It doesn't mean that he can't have humor or enjoy life. But he is to be a man living with the sincerity, and the soberness, and the urgency, and emergency of the hour.

He is to be *"just."* That means he is to be right with others. And then, he is to be *"holy."* That means he is to be right with God. And then, he is to be *"temperate."* That means he has his own life under control.

And so, what Paul is saying to Titus, is, "Titus, be blameless in your home life. Titus, be blameless in your personal life." I remind you one more time what he says to Titus he says to every mother's child. He is just simply saying, "Titus, you are to be one that holds the standard, if nobody else does."

### III. Blameless in His Pastoral Life

All right, thirdly, you are to be blameless in your pastoral life. Begin reading now in verse 9: *"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake,"* and so forth.

Now, what Paul was saying that was true in Crete is true in America. There are many churches that have lost their moorings. They need a man of God who will hold forth the Word of God and not let it go, *"holding fast."* I see preachers today and churches today that are letting go of some things they should never let go of. They should hold fast. Sometimes they say, "Well, this thing will get a crowd." Well, a circus will get a crowd. *Now, we ought not to be arrogant, dogmatic over incidentals, but there are some things we ought to be bull-dogmatic about.*

When I was a young preacher, Les, sometimes some of the older people would come and put their arm around my shoulder and say, "Now, son, God has gifted you, but you are a little dogmatic. What you need to do is lighten up a little bit. But son, as you get older, you will mellow." Do you know what mellow is? That is the state that some piece of fruit gets just before it rots. I am not talking about being arrogant, but I would to God that we had across this land, I mean in every pulpit—think of the churches that we have on the street corners of every major city—what would happen in America if this Lord's Day men of God aflame with righteousness would open the Word of God and say with passion and purity and power, "Thus saith the Lord." America could be set right in almost days, weeks, or months. Hold it fast.

I have in my study a bulldog, a little soft, cuddly bulldog, like a toy. Joyce bought it for me one time because at a convention somebody stood up and said, "Well, Adrian Rogers, he is like a pit bull with a bar of steel in his mouth; he just won't let go." Well,

they meant that critically, but Joyce kind of liked it. She bought me a bulldog. It is in my study. I have had it for years. One thing I like about a bulldog, his nose slants backward. Have you ever noticed that? Do you know why that is? So he can hold on and still keep breathing. That is right—so he can still breathe while he is holding on. Les, you are a young man, but you get a bulldog grip on the Word of God, and don't you let it go.

He says here again—look at it: *“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may...by sound doctrine.”* Look at the word *sound*. Do you see the word *sound* there? Do you know what that word literally means—*sound*? It has the idea of health. Actually, it is the word we get our word *hygiene* from. When Jesus would heal somebody, this same word would be used. Well, how would it be used for healing? He has been made sound. We are talking about a person who has sound health, for example. So you are to have sound doctrine. That means healthy doctrine. I have found out through the years that if you will hold forth the Word of Life with sound doctrine, it will have a healing effect. It is the word that we get our English word *hygiene* from. There is a catharsis to the Word of God. It will make churches wholesome.

I am going to wrap this up, but I just want to just say three things the Word of God will do in your ministry, my ministry, our ministry. Number one: it will comfort. Notice what he says here: *“holding forth the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may...by [hygienic] doctrine”*—healthy doctrine—*“both...exhort”*—that is the first thing it does. It will comfort. It will exhort. The Word of God exhorts. It builds up. Some churches are built on negative preaching that builds up fear and guilt rather than faith. We are to exhort. I hope when you leave the house of God whenever I preach that you feel stronger, that somehow you have been exhorted to be a man of God. There are so many people who come to church on Sunday morning, they are broken. That is the reason I said to begin with, things need to be set in order like broken bones. I have learned a long time ago that there is a broken heart on every pew. People need to be exhorted. They need to be fired up. They have knots in their soul that need to be untied. The Word of God will comfort, and the Word of God will convict.

Look in verse 9 again: *“Both to exhort and to convince”*—the word *convince* literally means *convict*—*“the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision.”*—they are subversive—*“whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses.”* And while you exhort, you also have to preach it straight. The devil wars on a church. The devil will war on Bellevue Baptist Church.

I just came out of my study, and channel 24 at 6—I caught it because I knew it was going to be on—they have done a story on Bellevue. It is a pretty good story. I mean they treated us right. Maybe you will see it in the evening news tonight. But all it does is just give us a higher profile. There will be people—Satan always opposes a work of

God. But the worst opposition many times is not from without the church but from within the church. But I have found out that the Word of God, not only does it comfort; it convicts. And if you will keep the pulpit straight, true, pure, it deals with opposition. One of the worst things in this world is to see a preacher with fear in his eyes. I tell young preachers, “When you go to a church, you go to that church to stay the rest of your life, or leave in the next fifteen minutes—either way—but preach the Word of God.” The Bible will comfort, it will convict, and it will convert.

Look, if you will, in verse 11: *“Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, the Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.”*

I have been on the trail long enough to know that I know that I know the Bible will get the job done. I have seen drunkards made sober. I have seen harlots made pure. I have seen brutal people made gentle. I have seen the gospel of Jesus Christ heal broken hearts, broken hopes, and broken homes. What a wonderful, wonderful book we have!

## Conclusion

Les Helton, integrity: be blameless in your home life, be blameless in your personal life, and be blameless in your pastoral life. We will be happy that we are the church that ordained you.

I am going to ask you to come and kneel up here, if you will. Paul, if you will, Lisa, if you will, come and stand by him. And the Ordination Council, I am going to ask you to come and line up over here, and come by; we are going to have the laying on of hands. This will take just a moment. Don’t be in a hurry to leave. What do we do when we have the laying on of hands? Well, I suggest, first of all, you pray for Les and Lisa and the children. And then, I would suggest, secondly, that you pray for yourself, and you say, “Lord, don’t let me be such a hypocrite to expect something out of Les that I am not willing to do or be myself.” Now, Les, if you will, just kneel here. Lisa, just stay by his side. As these come to lay their hands on the head of this man, it is highly symbolic; it is deeply spiritual. It just symbolizes that this church is recognizing here on earth that which we believe has been ordained in Heaven. And this man is set aside to the gospel ministry. You may begin.

# How to Make a Home Beautiful

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: May 14, 2000**

**Main Scripture Text: Titus 2:1–5**

*“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness,  
not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;”*

TITUS 2:3

## Outline

Introduction

I. The Legacy That She Is to Leave

- A. Holy in Her Lifestyle
- B. Godly in Her Speech
- C. Free from Addictive Things
- D. Teach the Younger Children

II. The Love That She Is to Learn

- A. To Love Their Children
  - 1. Tell Them
  - 2. Touch Them
  - 3. Teach Them

- B. To Love Their Husbands

III. The Lifestyle That She Is to Live

- A. She's to Be Discreet
- B. She's to Be Chaste
- C. She's to Be a Keeper at Home
- D. She's to Be Good
- E. She's to Be Obedient to Her Husband
  - 1. Rebellion Causes Trouble With God
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  - 3. Rebellion Causes Trouble with Your Children
  - 4. Rebellion Causes Trouble with Herself

Conclusion

## Introduction

Would you open your Bibles to Titus chapter 2, tonight? And, I want to talk to you about the home and how to make a home beautiful. You know, it's possible that you could live in a magnificent house and have an ugly home. And so, we want to talk about how to have not just a fine, magnificent house, but how to have a beautiful home. Titus chapter 2—here's what he says: “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine”

(Titus 2:1). Now, the word *become* means “to make beautiful.”

For example, if a lady buys a new dress, and her husband says, “That is becoming to you,” what he means is, “That is very beautiful; that looks good on you.” Now, what he is saying here is to speak that which become sound doctrine; he’s really saying to make truth beautiful. You have the same idea if you’ll go down to verse 10: “*Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God*” (Titus 2:10). Again, an adornment is that which makes beautiful. This word here is the word, literally, that deals with cosmetics—that you might put on the cosmetics of the Word of God, adorn the doctrine of God.

You know, you can take truth and make it ugly, or you can trade truth and make it beautiful. Some people use the Bible as a club rather than a sword. And so, we need to do that which is becoming to sound doctrine, that which adorns the doctrine of God.

You know, most of our precious ladies look better with a little cosmetics. That doesn’t hurt. I don’t mean like you’re growing your own penicillin. I’ve seen some—I don’t know, they don’t know that a little is enough, especially around the eyes. They look like a jack-o-lantern with the candle out. But, they are to adorn themselves, and we can adorn the gospel of God.

Now, we do have some ugly homes, and some of them are in some beautiful houses. We have a generation today that’s lost its moorings. That’s the reason I’m so happy for these children’s programs, because somebody needs to teach the children at this age, because our generation is like a ship at sea that has lost its moorings—without a rudder and without a compass. And, I’m very sad, even to the point almost of despair; but, because I know God, I am not in despair. And, it’s not because we are not trying. The sad thing is that we are drowning in a sea of information—seminars, conferences, marriage encounters, counselors, *ad infinitus ad nauseum*. We’re on, and on, and on—ever learning and not able to come to the knowledge of the truth, because, very frankly, all of these things are not based on the Word of God.

We, in the Southern Baptist Convention, have been in a battle as a denomination for the Word of God. Aren’t you amazed at what some denominations are debating today—whether this thing is right, or that thing is right? We’ve got to have a standard. Without the standard, you and I may be watching the very death of marriage, as we know it, and the homicide of the home. There are some very real enemies out there—I mean, very real enemies: immorality, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, abortion, sterilization, radical feminism, juvenile delinquency, crime, sexual rebellion. We’re up against something that’s very hard. And, all of these things are like strands in a cord that are just strangling the family. Now, God wants to make a home beautiful. And, you know, the key to a beautiful home is the wife and mother.

It’s Mother’s Day, so I want to talk to you about what the Bible has to say about

being a godly mother and helping that mother to have a beautiful home. Now, let's continue to read now. We started in verse 1. He says... Well, let's read verse 1 again: "*But speak thou the things which become*"—or make beautiful—"*sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience*" (Titus 2:1–2). Before he gets to the older women, he gets to the older men. And, there's something wonderful about a man who can grow old gracefully—a godly old man.

I think there's nothing more honorable, more beautiful than a godly old man. The Bible says that "*his grey head is a crown of glory to him,*" and he's to be the glory of his children (Proverbs 16:31). He's to be the glory of his grandchildren. And, I want to say, on the other hand, that Satan has no happy old men. He's got some wild and reckless young men, but he has no happy old men. I don't think there's anything uglier than an ungodly old man. I mean, have you ever seen some of them? His eyes are like burned-out sockets of lust. His mouth is an open sewer. His mind is like a city dump. And, all he's looking forward to is getting sicker and sicker until he dies and then being stuck in a hole in the ground. But, a godly old man is a wonderful thing and a joy to be around.

But, let's fast-forward, because tonight we're talking, primarily, to our ladies. So, look in verse 3, and he speaks here to "*the aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed*" (Titus 2:3–5).

## **I. The Legacy That She Is to Leave**

Now, as we talk about a godly woman who makes her house beautiful, her home beautiful, I want you to see what I'm going to call *the legacy that she is to leave*. She is to be teaching the younger children. She's to set an example for the younger people.

### **A. Holy in Her Lifestyle**

And, how's she going to do that? Verse 3 says, first of all, with some good, old-fashioned holiness: "*in behaviour as becometh holiness*" (Titus 2:3). And, this speaks of the way she lives. It just speaks of her lifestyle.

How many really holy women do you know? I know one—I'm married to her. She is a holy woman, and she's a joy to be around. Actually, this word *holiness*, the scholars tell us, has something to do with the priest as he's coming out of the temple. And, he's been in there burning incense. And, when he comes out of the temple, you can just smell the incense in his garments. I know people like that—that, when you get around them, there's something about their presence. There's just the perfume of God in their lives. Now, that's the way an aged woman ought to be. She is to be holy in her lifestyle.

## B. Godly in Her Speech

And, she's to be godly in her speech. Notice again it says she is not to be a false accuser (Titus 2:3). Do you see that, in verse 3? Well, let me just give it to you another way: not to be a scandalmonger. This word *false accuser* is the same word that we get our word *devil* from. The very word *devil—diabolos*—means “someone who is casting slander about”; it means “a slanderer.” Gossip is a disease that gets worse with age, and some of the worst gossips are older people. And, there's something very ugly about a home that is not a holy home and a home that is filled with slander and gossip.

One woman was talking about going to Heaven. She said, “You know, I'm just wondering—when I get to Heaven, if I wear a robe, how will I ever get my robe over my wings?” A friend said, “What concerns me is how you're going to get a hat over your horns.”

Because of the gossip, you're like Satan.

## C. Free from Addictive Things

Now also, she's to be free from addictive things. Notice here: “*not given to much wine*” (Titus 2:3). When I say this, some people just perk up, and they say, “Ah-hah! That means I can be given to a little wine.” I'm sorry about that, but that's not what this means. When it says, “*Not given to much wine*,” that's an idiom which says that she really is to stay away from wine totally, completely (Titus 2:3). We're talking about intoxicating wine. This is a combination of three Greek words: *me*—M-E, which means “not”; and *par*—P-A-R—it's the word we get our word *parallel* from; and *oinos*. *Meparoinos*—which means “not close to wine, not alongside of wine; somebody who not only doesn't drink it, but somebody who actually stays away from it.”

And, incidentally, I am preparing a message that I'm going to preach soon on social drinking, and it is deeply needed, especially among our young people. The Bible teaches that we are to be totally abstinent from alcoholic beverages. Some people don't believe that, but I'm going to show you from the Word of God that's what the Bible teaches. And, a woman, a godly woman, who is to leave a legacy—she's to be holy. She is not to be a scandalmonger, and she's not to be addicted to substances. And, certainly, the spirit of this would include cigarettes, and pills, and diet drugs, and anything else that is addictive.

## D. Teach the Younger Children

And then, not only is she to set an example for the younger women—we're talking about the legacy she's to leave for the younger women—but she also must teach them. Look again in verses 4 and 5: “*That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed*” (Titus 2:4–5).

Who is going to teach younger women today to be homemakers? Who's going to do that? Is Oprah going to do that? Maybe Geraldo could do that. Maybe Jerry Springer could do that. Maybe the soap operas can teach that. Maybe the universities are going to teach that. I want to ask you a question: Who is going to teach these young ladies to be homemakers? Well, God says we need some older women who are going to teach this thing. And, actually, it says—look at it, if you will: “that which is good.” Do you see that? *“That they may teach the young women to be sober”—and verse 5—“To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good”* (Titus 2:4–5). The word *good* literally has the idea of values; it means “family values.”

You know what we need in America today? Some godly grandmommas and some older women who are going to be teaching these younger women to be homemakers. Our young ladies today are getting married, and, very frankly, they know very little about homemaking. They spend a lot of money on the wedding, very little money getting ready for the marriage. Some of them get married and can't even cook. They don't even know the recipe for ice cubes. I know the recipe for ice cubes. It's H<sub>2</sub>O squared. I can make ice cubes that'll melt in your mouth. They don't know the very basic things. Who's going to teach them? We need some godly mothers in Israel who will teach these younger women.

A few days ago—well, actually, yesterday—we had a group of high school seniors, graduating seniors, the girls, in our home. And, I went out of the room, and Mrs. Rogers sat down and talked with these girls about just being a godly young lady, looking forward to marriage, looking forward to having a home. And, we're going to talk a little bit more about that, in a moment. But, the first thing I want you to notice is the legacy she is to leave. You mothers, and you grandmothers, and you ladies in the church who have experience—somehow, we need to get you with these younger women. And, by the way, we are doing that here, in our Women's Work. It's one of the finest things that we're doing, and that is the MOMS ministry, another ministry to our younger women.

## **II. The Love That She Is to Learn**

But, here's the second thing I want you to see: not only the legacy that she is to leave by setting an example and by teaching, but the love that she is to learn. Now, what are the older women to teach the younger women? Look at it—verse 4: *“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed”* (Titus 2:4–5).

### **A. To Love Their Children**

Did you know that you're to teach the younger women to love their children? Many

women today don't really even know how to love their children. How do you love a child? Well, let me tell you three things you can do: You can tell them; you can touch them; and you can teach them.

### **1. Tell Them**

Tell them over and over again that you love them. You cannot tell them too many times that you love them.

### **2. Touch Them**

Touch them. I appreciated what Ken Whitten had to say last Sunday night about getting these kids up, and hugging them, and kissing them, whether they say they want you to or not. Touch them.

### **3. Teach Them**

And, teach them day-by-day, line-upon-line, precept-upon-precept, here a little, there a little. Did you know that many child abusers come from an abusive family? One of the great needs today is for mothers to love children. The radical feminists have taught women today that having a career is perhaps more important than being a homemaker, and material goods are more important than children. Psalm 127 says, *“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward”* (Psalm 127:3). We have a generation today who looks at children as burdens rather than blessings. There's something wrong in America when children are looked on as burdens rather than blessings. There's something desperately wrong when the most—well, give God a hand, yeah—there's something drastically wrong when, in America, we put to death a child in its mother's womb, which ought to be the safest place on Earth, is rapidly becoming the most dangerous place. Our hearts go out to women who want children and cannot have them. I've been in counseling sessions with wonderful people. What a shame it is for those who can have them and refuse, for selfish reasons, not to have these children. In the Bible, women who have blessed this world have been women who have prayed for children, and God has answered their prayer.

Sarah was barren until she was ninety years old. And, she prayed, and God gave to Sarah Isaac, who... Our Savior came from the line of Isaac. Rachel cried. She said, “Oh God, give me children, or I die.” And. God answered her prayer and gave her Joseph, who delivered the nation of Israel. Ruth, who was barren, wanted a child, prayed, and God gave her one. She found mercy and became the father of Obed, who is the grandfather of David, Israel's greatest king, and from whose line came the Savior. Elizabeth was stricken in years. And, she prayed, and God opened her womb and gave to her John the Baptist. Jesus said, “Not a greater was born of woman than John the Baptist” (Matthew 11:11). Hannah was in the holy place praying and sobbing so much that the great prophet thought that—Eli thought that—perhaps she was drunk. But, she

said, “I’m not drunk. I’m praying, asking God to give me a child.” And, God gave to Hannah little Samuel, who became the mighty prophet of Israel.

The tragedy of abortion—this lack of love for children—is this: Who knows whom we may have killed in the very womb? Perhaps the person who would have given this world the answer to cancer, perhaps another Billy Graham, perhaps someone would have had the answer to the AIDS epidemic. Who knows what kind of a life we have snuffed out! Being a homemaker is not easy, not glamorous. But, ladies, and young ladies, I want to tell you there is no higher calling. Fathers have influence on their children, but mothers make the greatest impression—and that is a fact.

### **B. To Love Their Husbands**

Now, the Bible teaches that the older women are to teach the younger women to love their children. And, number two: to love their husbands. Now, if she can be taught to love her husband, that means that she can love her husband. And, we’re talking about love. We’re not talking about soap opera love. As a matter of fact, if you’re watching those soap operas, my advise to you is cut it out. Just don’t watch them. All that is about is sex, and immorality, and perversion. That’s all it’s about. And, you watch that long enough, and you’re going to become suspicious. You’re going to be wondering, “You know, I wonder if my husband is living that way?” Love your husband. Mrs. Billy Graham said, “It’s your job to love your husband; it’s God’s job to make him good.”

## **III. The Lifestyle That She Is to Live**

And so, you think of the legacy she is to leave, and you think of the love that she’s to learn. This is what she’s been taught. Now, let’s shift gears and think a little bit about the lifestyle that she is to live. Verse 5—here’s her lifestyle: She’s *“to be discreet, chaste, keeps at home, good, obedient to her own husband, that the word of God be not blasphemed”* (Titus 2:5).

### **A. She’s to Be Discreet**

Now, what does the word *discreet* mean? Well, the word *discreet* means “sober-minded”; it means “serious”; it means “sensible”; it means “using good judgment.” She’s going to use good judgment in her shopping, in her nutrition, bookkeeping, decorating, in her physical culture. The Bible says, “When you find a wife, you’ll find a good thing” (Proverbs 18:22). She’s to do her husband good and not evil all the days of her life.

### **B. She’s to Be Chaste**

And then, look—not only discreet, but chaste. The word here means “pure.” Chaste—not sexy, not foxy—chaste. Young lady, keep yourself pure and save yourself for the one you’re going to marry. Go to the marriage altar a virgin. Make that your

purpose. Save yourself for the one that you're going to marry. And, the older women need to be teaching the young women this. We have mothers today who are giving their daughters advice, and birth control pills, and all of these things. I can't believe that. You're to teach them just the opposite—to be pure, to be chaste. And, don't think that the high school's going to do it, the junior high school's going to do it. The last place on Earth these kids need to learn about sexual morality is in the secular schools. Listen, our moral sexual education will never work for good; it will always only work for harm if it is not based with morals and Bible truth. And, you'd better see to it that your kids understand what the Bible teaches.

### **C. She's to Be a Keeper at Home**

Teach them to be discreet, to use good judgment. Teach them to be chaste—that is, to be morally pure. And, teach them to be keepers at home. Does that mean she can't go out of the house? No. This Greek word comes from a word that literally means “to be a housekeeper”—that is, “a worker at home.” It comes from two words—one meaning “house,” and the other means “to work.” That means that her major responsibility is to keep the home.

Now, we have about fifty million working mothers in America today, and approximately one out of every three mothers with children under three holds a full-time job. But, being a homemaker is a full-time occupation. And, I've said it often: My heart is out, my hat is off, to women who have to work. But, if you're working in order to have a bigger house, a finer vacation, a nicer car, and not spending time with those children, especially when they're little, you're making a terrible mistake. First Timothy 5, verse 14—Paul says, *“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully”* (1 Timothy 5:14). The mother is to be the queen of the home. There is no higher calling and no greater career than to be a homemaker.

Now, you say, “Well, we need that extra income. Everybody today has these two incomes, and we've gotten our lifestyle where we need that extra income.” Well, be very careful that you evaluate need correctly, and be very careful that you do your homework to find out just how much your wife may be making. I was reading where a Chicago firm made a study and concluded that after all the added expenses and overhead are taken away, only about ten percent of the working mother's wages remain—only about ten percent. Now, that may be a very expensive ten percent. And, you say, “Well Adrian, what do you know about it? You haven't had that experience.” Well, I think I have.

I worked my way through college and through seminary. And, Joyce and I lived from hand to mouth—God's hand to our mouth. We got married after our first year in college. We'd been grade school sweethearts and high school sweethearts. We felt it was time

to get married. And, I'd not quite reached my twenties, but we got married; and, I was working my way through school. Joyce was in school. Her father was paying her tuition. But, we just decided that we're going to start our family. We're going to work. And, I worked at many jobs. I've worked as a fruit packer. I've worked as a busboy. I've worked as a butcher, carpenter's helper, elevator mechanic, used car salesman—I was good at that—working as inspecting houses for termites.

I want to give you a testimony: For seven years—seven years of getting an education, raising a family—my wife was able to stay home with the children. I was able to finish the school, able to graduate, without owing anybody anything by trusting the Lord, and tithing, and working. It wasn't easy, but it was worth it. And, I wouldn't take anything for letting Joyce be home with our little ones while we were going through school. Now, we could have had some things that some of the other people had, but we didn't have them. I wore hand-me-down clothes, and we worked hard, but God honored that. And, I'm glad that we did that. And, I don't say it boastfully, and not everybody can do that, and God was good to us. We didn't have anything extra. We were like many young couples. We had to get that check down to the bank each week, but God blessed, and God honored. And, I just believe that, if at all possible, a woman is to stay home.

Now, listen: You need to understand that this does not limit a woman. Read Proverbs chapter 31 and find out what all a housekeeper can do. If you read Proverbs chapter 31, you're going to find out that a godly woman's activities include travel, and commerce, and agriculture, and investment in property and charity, but she does not neglect her household (Proverbs 31). How do you measure how much outside interest a woman is to have? In my estimation, here's the way you measure it—and it's very simple: Does her outside work contribute to the home or detract from it? It's just that simple. Does the thing that she's doing, whatever it is—read Proverbs chapter 31 and see—does it contribute to the home or detract from the home? The home is the center, the most important part of our lives.

I'm pastor of this church. This may seem like heresy to you, but my home is more important to me than this church. And, if I had to choose between this church and my wife, I wouldn't have to think about it. You can get another pastor; I've got one wife. You know, the Bible says that if a man is a pastor, one of the prime requisites for being a pastor is that he has a successful family. (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6) That is, if you're not doing it at home, don't stand in the pulpit and export it. And, what we need to understand is that it is not business; it is not education; it is not recreation; it is not government; it is not the Church—it is the home that is the basic unit of everything; and, therefore, all of the artillery of Hell is leveled against the home. And, our kids—many of our kids going off to college—everybody asks them this question (especially to the

young ladies): “What are you going to be? What are you going to do? What are you going to be?” And, if she says, “Well, I want to be a wife and a mother.” “A what?”—like that’s some sort of a failure, like you’ve missed it if you want to be... “Oh, what a waste!” Friend, that is not a waste, not a waste. That is the highest, deepest, sweetest, fullest, most meaningful thing that you can do—is to have a godly Christian home. Teach these young women to be homemakers, keepers at home. This is what it says.

#### **D. She’s to Be Good**

And then, next, it teaches her—it says, “Teach them to be good” (Titus 2:5). Now, the word *good*, here, doesn’t mean “not doing bad.” What it literally means is “to be kind-hearted,” not just morally straight. Every home needs a heart—a person with a good heart—not someone who is hateful and sharp. The law of kindness needs to be in her mouth.

#### **E. She’s to Be Obedient to Her Husband**

And then, she’s to be taught to be obedient to her husband. Now, right now, I’m going to something that’s very politically incorrect, but it is biblically true. Just take your Bible and look at it—verse 4: “*That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands*” (Titus 2:4–5). You know, there are people who want to take the word *obey* out of the marriage ceremony. Sometimes, when I perform a marriage, I look out, and when I say to the wife that she is to say to her husband that “I will be obedient,” you look at the heads snap. “Did he say that? Good night! Doesn’t he realize this is the 21st Century? How could he say such a thing?” No, she’s to be obedient to the husband. Now, that doesn’t mean the husband is the dictator; it means that the husband is to give loving leadership to the home. We talk about a chain of command. It’s not so much a chain of command as it is the acceptance of responsibility. And, submission is not subjugation. The husband is not some sort of a top sergeant in the home, using the Bible as a club to beat his wife with. That won’t go.

A man said, “I used to subscribe to the theory of male superiority, but my wife cancelled my subscription.” The husband is not superior to the wife. I’m not superior to Joyce. I say this without equivocation: In many ways, she is superior to me. She made better grades than I made in school. As I’ve already told you, she beat me in the better speaker’s tournament. But, she is to be in submission, obedient, to her own husband. Paul explains this in another place—in Ephesians 5, verse 22: “*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands*”—and, by the way, that word *own* is the word *idios*—“your idiot husband”—“*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands*”—it means “special husband”—“*as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife*”—now, here’s the parallel. Listen to it. Don’t miss it—“*even as Christ is the head of the*

*church: and he is the saviour of the body*” (Ephesians 5:22–23). A husband is to be to his wife what Jesus is to the Church.

Now, this is not for her punishment; it is for her protection. First Corinthians 11 and verse 3: *“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God”* (1 Corinthians 11:3). Now, notice this line here: God the Father, God the Son, the man, the woman. Now, just as God the Son is under God the Father in the Holy Trinity, the woman is under the man in God’s scheme of things. It does not mean inferiority. If you know Bible theology, you know that Jesus Christ is co-equal, co-eternal with God the Father—not inferior. But, there is the Holy Trinity in this line: *“I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God”* (1 Corinthians 11:3). Now, because God the Father’s the head of Christ the Son, it does not mean that Christ the Son is inferior to God the Father. No woman is inferior to a man. Galatians 3, verse 28: *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond or free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”* (Galatians 3:28). We’re all one in Christ.

But still, God has given this line of responsibility in the home. And, this needs to be taught. It’s not being taught today. And, a woman who rebels against this is going to have trouble.

### **1. Rebellion Causes Trouble With God**

She’s going to have trouble, first of all, with God. And, if you have a rebellious spirit towards your husband, your problem is not primarily toward your husband; it’s toward God.

### **2. Rebellion Causes Trouble with Your Husband**

But, not only are you going to have difficulty with God; you are going to have difficulty with your husband. Rather than being his completer, you’re going to become his crippler.

### **3. Rebellion Causes Trouble with Your Children**

And then, you’re going to have trouble with your children, because if you’re not under the headship of your husband, you’re not going to be able to have authority—spiritual authority—with your children. A woman who cannot learn to be under authority can never be trusted with authority. And, by the way, Dr. Dudley Dennison said this—quote: *“As a doctor and counselor, I have found often the male homosexual comes from a home with a dominant mother and a passive father.”*

### **4. Rebellion Causes Trouble with Herself**

And then, she’s going to have trouble with herself. She’s not going to have her deepest

needs met. Submission does not remove freedom. When is a train more free—when it's on the train tracks or running through the meadow? When you get on God's plan, begin to obey the Word of God, you're going to find out that God will give you incredible liberty.

## **Conclusion**

And so, in these verses here: how to make a home beautiful, how to adorn the doctrine of God, that which becomes sound doctrine, that which is becoming. A woman is to learn these three things: There is the legacy that she is to leave—she's to teach the younger women. There's the love she's to learn. Any other way is to blaspheme the Word of God. Look at the last part of verse 5. The Bible says, "Do this, that the Word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:5). Somehow we've gotten a generation that thinks it's smarter than God. But, even a casual look around will tell you there's something very, very wrong in today's world. I submit to you, when all else fails, read the directions. There it is—the Word of God.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. And, why don't you just, for just a moment—just a moment—pray for your own home, that your home will not be just a place where you congregate or come and go, but that your home will be a beautiful home, a Christ-centered home. And, would you pray about anything that God has spoken to you about in this message, whether you're a husband or a wife? And, just pray that God will make your home what it ought to be. We're going to wait just a few moments.

Father, I thank You for Your grace that has enabled us to have godly homes. And, Lord, we pray now that You'll just take this word today and mold our heart with it. Lord, we pray especially for a young generation that has gotten so far away from the basic and beautiful truth that You've given here in the Word of God. Work, dear Lord, work in my heart and in our hearts. And, we pray that this church will have a generation of young people that will learn, and love, and live in a godly way. In Jesus' precious name, amen.

# The Magnificence of Motherhood

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** May 18, 1986

**Main Scripture Text:** Titus 2:1–5

*“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”*

TITUS 2:4–5

## Outline

Introduction

- I. A Glorious Place
- II. A Grievous Problem
  - A. A Sin Against God
  - B. A Sin Against Her Nature
  - C. A Sin Against Her Welfare
  - D. A Sin Against Her Family
- III. A Gracious Plan
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  - B. Husbands Owe Protection
  - C. Husbands Owe Partnership

Conclusion

## Introduction

Take your Bibles, and turn with me, please, to Titus 2. We’re going to begin reading, in just a moment, in verse 1. I want to speak to you on this subject: “The Magnificence of Motherhood.” Now here’s what God’s Word says, in Titus 2:1–5—Paul is speaking to Titus, and he says, *“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:”*—that is, this is basic—*“that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed”* (Titus 2:1–5). God Almighty, because He loves us, created the home, and intends for the home to be the sweetest place on earth, and the nearest place to Heaven. I’ve told you before that Jesus is the greatest homebuilder. Satan is the greatest home wrecker.

We have, today, failing fathers and militant mothers. I want to give you some quotes that are heartbreaking. Here is what one woman has said—I quote: “A woman who stays at home caring for children and the house leads an extremely sterile existence. This kind of woman leads a parasitic existence, that is. She’s a parasite that can be described as legalized prostitution.” That was said in a pamphlet called “Sisterhood is Powerful,” which was talking to women in the modern women’s lib movement. Again, I want to read what another woman, Roxanne Dunbar, had to say about the family. She said, “The family is a decadent, energy-absorbing, destructive, and wasteful institution.” Now again, here is what another feminist said, and again, I quote: “We can’t destroy the inequities between men and woman until we destroy marriage. We must free ourselves, and marriage is the place to begin.” There is a satanically inspired war on the family, a war on marriage, and a war on motherhood itself. This vile egg has been hatched in the incubator of Hell, and it is a part of Satan’s mastermind—to enslave human souls and to damn the race.

Now when I talk about women’s liberation, I know that there is a lot of controversy. I know there’s a lot of philosophy, and a lot of ideas. If I know much about preaching, there will be some who won’t like what I have to say tonight, and perhaps, some of you will get angry with me. If you do, then that’s all right. You can come up and apologize to me after the service, and I’ll forgive you—ha! But I want us to see, dear friend, that this issue is not going to be settled, as far as I’m concerned, not apart from the Word of God, not apart from preacher’s philosophy, not with some politician’s philosophy, or some feminist’s idea, but with the Word of God.

Now as you and I both know, there are some honest grievances that women have today. I think we’ve all come to see that equal work ought to receive equal pay. Husbands ought to realize that their wives are not slaves. So many men have failed with our chauvinistic attitudes toward women.

I heard about a man who came back to the South Sea Islands after the war in the Pacific. He asked one of the natives on those South Sea Islands, “Has there been any difference after the Americans were over here than before the Americans were over here, in the way that you treat your women?” “Oh,” he said, “there’s been a great difference.” He said, “Remember before you came over here how the man used to sit on the donkey, and the women would walk behind?” He said, “We no longer do that. Now the women walk in front—landmines, you know?”

I know we men are guilty of a lot of things, and I would not try to defend the excesses in the sins of chauvinistic males. But let’s see what God’s Word has, first of all, to say about the magnificence of motherhood.

## I. A Glorious Place

The first thing I want you to see is the glorious place that God has given the women. Turn with me now to Genesis 2:18, for a moment, and let's go all the way back to the Garden of Eden, and see how God made things to be in the very beginning. This is before sin came into the world. This is not some judgment upon women. It's not because God is trying to get even or keep women in their place. This is the reason I've said this place is a glorious place: *"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him"* (Genesis 2:18). Now God's plan for women was this: She was created to be a helper that is fit for him, or a helper that is "meet for him." That is, she is to complement that which is missing in man. She is to be his helper. She is to be his completer, and the Bible tells us, again, if you're taking notes, in 1 Corinthians 11:9: *"Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man."* The woman was created for the man. And in the home, the woman is under the direction and leadership of the man.

Look with me, please, in Genesis 3:16. God said to the women, after sin had come into the world: *"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."* Now again, I want to tell you that I did not write this—I just read it—and it comes from the Word of God.

Then, I want you to turn with me, please, in the New Testament, to 1 Corinthians 11, and again, let's see what the Word of God has to say. We'll explain some of this, and interpret it, but right now, I'm just laying the groundwork. 1 Corinthians 11:3: *"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."* Now notice, the woman was made to be a helpmeet for man. The Bible says that the woman was created for the man. The Bible says that *"thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."* The Bible says that the head of the woman is the man.

Now turn to Ephesians 5, and look with me, please, in verse 22. It's no wonder that Paul said here, in Ephesians 5:22–23: *"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."* Now as Christ is the savior of the body called the Church, the husband is to be his wife's savior and protector—not that he can save her in the spiritual sense, but he is to be to her, in the material world, what Jesus is to us in the spiritual world. And notice the *therefore* in verse 24: *"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing"* (Ephesians 5:24). Now what is the glorious place that God has given to a woman? That is, she is to stand by a man's side. She is to be the helpmeet that God has given to him. This does not mean, as I've said so many times, that a

woman is inferior to a man. We'll point that out later on. But let me say this is the God-appointed place—not the assignment of a Baptist preacher, but God's assignment.

## II. A Grievous Problem

Now let's go to a second point, if we might. I've talked about a glorious place; now, let's talk about a grievous problem. We have, today, women who do not want that God-assigned place. They feel that, somehow, that denigrates women. They feel that it puts women down, and it speaks of women as being less valuable than man—that it speaks of women, somehow, as being less than equal with men. This is totally, absolutely, as I'm going to show you in a moment, untrue. But what happens when a woman rebels against the God-appointed place that God has given to her? What does she do?

### A. A Sin Against God

Well, first of all, she sins against her God. Now remember, this chain of command here goes back to 1 Corinthians 11:3—the Bible says: *“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”* Now God has a chain of command: here is God the Father; God the Son; the man; then, the woman. Now all sin is ultimately a sin against authority. Rebellion is the root of all sin. And when a woman says, “I will not take the God-assigned place,” that woman, at that time, expresses rebellion. *We're never more like the devil than when we rebel against the God-assigned place. We're never more like the Lord Jesus than when we submit to our God-assigned place.* Now God has given a chain of command, and without the chain of command, we could not function in this world; spiritually, we could not function. God the Father; God the Son; the man; the woman; and the Church—we could not function.

There has been a big flap in the Southern Baptist Convention, lately, about pastoral authority, but the Bible clearly teaches pastoral authority. Look, if you will, in Hebrews 13:17—the Bible says: *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”*

Now here, Paul is talking about the elder, the bishop, and the overseer of the church. The word *bishop* means “one who oversees”; it is synonymous with *pastor* or *elder*. And the Bible says that he has a place of ruler-ship. That doesn't mean that he's a dictator. That doesn't mean that he's a law unto himself. That does not mean that he should not ask for, and indeed, require and pray for, full participation of lay people—both men and women. It does mean that, in God's economy, in the church, the bishop, pastor, or elder has said headship, as he has in the family.

Listen to it again. Again, I didn't write this, and I'm not preaching it because I happen

to be the pastor. It is simply there in the Word of God—chapter 13, verse 17: *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account”* (Hebrews 13:17). One of these days, folks, I’m going to have to give account for the way I lead; and one of these days, you’re going to have to give an account for the way you follow. That’s a sobering thought. I’m saying, spiritually, I cannot function without a chain of command. In the church, we cannot function without a chain of command. In the government, we cannot function without a chain of command.

Turn with me to Romans chapter 13, for just a moment. Let’s look at another passage of Scripture—Romans 13:1–2: *“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.”* Now the context, if you’ll read it when you get home, is the higher governmental powers: *“For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”* Well, let’s go ahead and read verse 3: *“For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power?”*—that is, of the authority—*“do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he”*—that is, the civil magistrate—*“is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he”*—that is, the civil magistrate—*“is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake”* (Romans 13:3–5).

Now what I’m saying is that God says, in the spiritual realm, there’s a chain of authority: Father, Son, man, woman. In the Church, there is a chain of authority. In the government, there is a chain of authority. And in the home, with children and parents, there is that same chain of authority.

Go back with me to Ephesians 6:1–2, and look here for just a moment. We spoke of this scripture this morning, but let’s look at it again: *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise.”* Now God extends the chain of command—not only from the husband to the wife, but also from the parents down to the children.

Now I want to say that submission to authority does not mean inferiority. When you think of these different illustrations that I’ve given you, do you think that you’re inferior to me because I’m the pastor? Of course not. Do you think that I’m inferior to a policeman because I stop when he says stop and go when he says go? Of course not. Do you think that a child is inferior to his parents because that child obeys his parents? Of course not. Here’s the capstone: Do you think that God the Son is inferior to God the Father, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God? Of course not. If you know anything about Christian theology, then you know that the basic prime tenet of our faith

is the full deity of Jesus Christ—co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father. And yet, the Bible says that the head of Christ is God. God the Father is the head of Christ the Son.

Now folks, listen to me. Don't let anybody ever tell you that, when you submit, you submit because you're inferior to the one above you—not so, not so. When a woman rebels against God's plan, she is rebelling against the God of that plan. And so she sins against God.

Now some of the feminists have figured this out. Some of the feminists don't like the Bible that I read to you. I was talking to a couple last week, and they were kind of angry with me. I mean, they jumped me after a meeting—the two of them. One of them had just been to seminary, and the other one was just getting ready to go to seminary, and they jumped me. And I said, "Well now, folks, listen. Please don't argue with me. Let's just read the Scripture. Let's just read the Scripture, and then, if you don't like it, then hey, take it up with Him." You see, I don't write it. I'm just the Western Union boy—I deliver the message. Now if it's not there, then that's all right. But if it's there, then we need to see it, and we need to obey it.

It is no wonder that some women out in Berkeley—some feminists—burned the Bible. They recognized what the Bible said. I believe those who burned the Bible were more honest than those who tried to interpret the Bible, and twist it. At least, go ahead and admit you don't believe it, and you don't accept it, rather than try and twist it.

#### **B. A Sin Against Her Nature**

But not only does a woman who rebels sin against her God; she also, then, is going to sin against her nature. You see, God made woman to be feminine, and God made men to be masculine. If you will remember, a couple of Sundays ago, we said that God made them male and female in the beginning, and God said, "It is good" (Genesis 1:31).

Now if you sin against your femaleness or your maleness, then you sin against your own nature. Look with me, in Deuteronomy chapter 22, for just a moment—Deuteronomy 22:5: "*The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.*" That's very clear.

"Well," you say, "that's Old Testament." Yes, it's Old Testament, all right. But dear friend, there's a principle in this verse that runs from the Old Testament to the New Testament, and that is the principle of femininity and masculinity. The Bible is against *she-men*, and the Bible is against *he-women*.

"Well," you say, "Pastor, when it says that a woman is not to wear that which pertains to a man, and a man is not to wear that that a pertains to a women, does that mean women can't wear slacks? You've done quit preaching and gone to meddling

now, haven't you, Preacher?" No, I'll get in trouble with somebody when I say this, but I don't think that's what it means at all. I think there are times when work would demand it, and modesty would demand it, and that, perhaps, that's the best thing for you to wear. You see, when this was written, men wore skirts. I'm not about to preach in one of them.

Now what God is saying is that you know women's clothes when you see them, and you know men's clothes when you see them, don't you? What God is saying is that man ought to look like a man, and women ought to look like women. And a man ought not to dress so you have to look twice to find out. Sometimes, when I go in the restroom, I'm embarrassed. I think, "I'm in the wrong place. A guy's in there—I can't tell whether it's a *she* or *he*. It's a *shim*; you can't even tell." And what the Bible says is that a man needs to be manly, and a woman is to be feminine.

God says the same thing over here in the New Testament—even in the way that they wear their hair. Turn to 1 Corinthians 11:4–6: *"Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head."* That means you ought to take off your hat, sir, when you pray. *"But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven."* No woman ought to pray without her head covered; that's what this verse says: *"For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn:"*—that is, "shaven"—*"but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered."* Now in this day, the temple prostitutes shaved their heads completely. It was the mark of arrogance and rebellion.

And then, notice verses 7 and 8: *"For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man"* (1 Corinthians 11:7–8). That is, man was not made from woman, but woman was made from man; so therefore, man is in the image of God, and woman is in the image and the glory of the man.

But now, notice verse 9: *"Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man."* Now it can't be any more clear: *"For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels"* (1 Corinthians 11:9–10). Now the word *power* there means "authority," and when she prays with her head covered, it is a symbol that she is under authority. Now what does it mean: "because of the angels"? Well, what was the sin that caused Lucifer, the son of the morning, to become Satan, the father of the night? He rebelled against authority, and a great number of angels rebelled, also. God said, "Because of what happened to the angels, who left their headship, rebelled, and brought rebellion and sin into the world, no woman ought to pray with her head uncovered. If she does, then she is committing the same kind of sin that the angels committed—at least it's akin to that sin; it has connotations of that sin."

Now Paul makes it clear in verse 11 that he's not trying to say the man is superior:

*“Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord”* (1 Corinthians 11:11). In the Lord, where there’s neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, bond nor free (Galatians 3:28)—you understand that? All are equal. Paul tells us that in 1 Corinthians.

But now, he goes on to say: *“Judge in yourselves: is it comely”—that is, proper—  
“that a woman pray unto God uncovered?”* (1 Corinthians 11:13). Now here we come to the place: *“Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering”* (1 Corinthians 11:14–15).

Some people are very good and godly people, who believe that a woman ought to wear a hat to church. I never argue with them, because at least the Scripture is open to interpretation. I know women in some churches—you’ll see them—they’ll have a little white doily, or a little cap, or something, or will wear some kind of hat, when they come to church. Hey folks, don’t make fun of those people. Don’t make fun of those people. Because, what they’re saying is, “I want to have that mark of submission and humility, when I come into the church to pray. There is a covering on my head, and that covering on my head shows that I am under authority.”

Now I personally believe that this scripture teaches not that she ought to wear a hat, but I think it teaches that she ought to have long hair. I believe that what it teaches is that a woman ought to have long hair—a mark of femininity—because long hair—that mark of femininity—is her covering. Look at it again, here in verses 14 and 15: *“Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering”* (1 Corinthians 11:14–15). Now the fundamental difference of men and woman, therefore, ought to be seen, not only in the way they dress, but also in the way that they wear their hair.

Now another question comes up, because everybody is starting to look around and cast their eyes at everybody’s hair, now, you know—another question comes up. How long is long, and how short is short? Isn’t that a good question? Folks, I can’t answer that question. That’s like saying, “How long is a piece of string?” How long is long? How short is short? I don’t know, but I’ll tell you one thing I do know: that a woman ought to look like a woman, and a man ought to look like a man. Now when you come up from behind them, you ought to have no difficulty telling who’s who and what’s what, amen? That’s right. I mean, what does this scripture say? That a woman ought not to have a mannish look. Her hair is given to her; it’s a glory and it’s a sign of her submission to God. Now if you don’t do this, dear lady, not only are you going to sin against God, but you’re also going to sin against your nature. You’re going to be a misfit.

### C. **A Sin Against Her Welfare**

And when you sin against your God, and you sin against your nature, then you're going to sin against your welfare—that's the third thing. When women—these modern feminists—get what they want—you mark it down—they will not want what they get. When they are liberated soul sisters, they're going to find out they made a bad deal. Joyce says that she doesn't want to be equal with me; she's not coming down for anything. Let me tell you something, folks: Women were made by God, and created by God, and equipped by God more for having babies than they were for fighting wars—that's the way God made them.

Now I know that there are some women who, when they plan, may temporarily prosper. I know that there are some people who can prosper in war, but that doesn't mean that war is good. It doesn't mean that feminism, as the modern movement goes, is good. There will be, ultimately, a lack of respect for women. You see, God put women on a pedestal, and God gave men a direct command to protect women.

I heard about a factory that got off at the end of the day, and all the workers went to the buses outside to go home. One woman got on a bus. The factory whistle blew, and a man was sitting there, on the bus, reading a newspaper. This woman was standing there, in her blue jeans, holding a strap. He worked alongside of her there, in the factory. He never made any move to get up and give her a seat. After a while, she looked at him with a sneer and said, "It looks like you could get up and give a lady a seat." He looked up, for a moment, and said, "You dress like a man. You work like a man. You smoke like a man. You cuss like a man. You can stand like a man."

There is that lack of respect that is not supposed to be there. There is supposed to be, in a man, an inbred desire to protect women, as we're going to see later on. And when a woman acts as a man, she sins against her welfare. And mark it down, that while some may temporarily prosper, as a whole, when women get what they want, or what they think they want, they will not want what they get.

### D. **A Sin Against Her Family**

But now, let's come back all the way around—and I know it's taking me a long time to get here—but the woman also sins against her family. Now come back to the text that I started with, there, in Titus chapter 2, and see what God's Word says here, in Titus chapter 2. Look at it, again—God says, in Titus 2, that the older women are to teach the younger women this—chapter 2, verse 4: "*That they may teach the young women to be sober,*"—that word *sober* means that they're to teach them to be responsible—"*to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed*" (Titus 2:4–5). Now that's what God says.

We have this little thing today, you know: “It’s eleven o’clock; do you know where your children are?” We need to change it; we need to say, “It’s eleven o’clock; do you know where your parents are? Do you know where your mama is?” What God is saying, here, is that it’s not God’s plan that some daycare takes care of your children. Husbands need wives; children need a mama. And what has happened is that, when we put great numbers of women—that statistics report in today’s paper—in the workforce (and in just a few years now it has increased by 50%), damage is being done to the psyche of kids, to the whole moral scope of things—the divorce, the unemployment, all of this.

I’ve said it before, and I’ll say again: My hat goes off and my heart goes out to any woman who must work to put bread on the table, who must work to put clothes on the back of her children, and who must work to meet the recognized necessities of life. To those who work only for the pride of work, or those who work only for the luxuries that the money can bring, or those who work only for the so-called self-fulfillment and neglect to having babies if they could have them, or in the neglect of taking care of their children after they have had them—hey folks, that’s a bad deal. It’s a tragedy beyond compare. Again, don’t be angry with me if you have to work; don’t think I’m putting you down, for I am not. I love you, and I’ll pray the time will come when you’ll not have to. But I am saying, dear friend, that, when the woman does not see God’s plan, she sins against her God; then, she sins against her nature; then, she sins against the welfare; then, she sins against her own family.

### **III. A Gracious Plan**

Now let me wrap up this thing by saying that, not only is there a glorious position, not only is there a grievous problem, but there is also a gracious plan. Let me show you what God’s plan is. And if you ladies think that I’m talking down to you, then I want to tell you that I’m just getting ready to really talk down to the men. I believe that the problem in today’s society is not with women; I believe that the problem, clearly and plainly, is with the men.

Turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 3:7. Now while the Bible says, in 1 Peter chapter 3, that a woman is to be in subjection to her own husband, the Bible says, in 1 Peter 3:7, *“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”*

I have preached long enough, lived long enough, and counseled enough to come to this conclusion: *If a home is wrong, generally, it is because the man is wrong. I have yet to see, in all of my experience, a marriage where the husband loved God fervently and purely whose wife and children did not come along with him. I’ve seen many a*

*wife and many a child who love the Lord, whose father and husband would not follow; but I have yet to see the opposite.* I cannot give you chapter and verse; I'm just talking about experience, now. I'm talking by observation. I have yet to see where a man said it and meant it, lovingly: *"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD"* (Joshua 24:15), whose wife and children did not follow him.

### **A. Husbands Owe Provision**

Now husbands owe three things, according to this verse, to their wives. The very first thing they owe to their wives is provision. They are to provide for the wife. The husband is to be the breadwinner. When God gave woman the privilege of standing by man's side, God also gave to man the assignment to earn the bread by the sweat of his brow. And the reason that so many women today have to work is because the man has not prepared himself. He has not prayed. He has not sought the leadership of God. And the husband owes to the wife provision. You see, he's to love his wife as Christ loved the Church (Ephesians 5:25), and Christ provides our every need.

### **B. Husbands Owe Protection**

But not only does he owe his wife provision; he also owes his wife protection. *"Dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel"* (1 Peter 3:7). Now the reason that women's liberation is so wrong is that a woman does not need to be liberated from the protection of the male. He is to protect. If danger were to come to Joyce, then I would want to put myself between Joyce and that danger. I don't believe, in those realms, that we are equal. I believe that God made her physically and psychologically with a dependant nature. Now she'll outlive me by seven years, if statistics hold true. I've never really been able to figure out why they're called *the weaker sex*, when they outlive us. But I think I know that the weakness of the stronger sex is the weakness of the stronger sex for the weaker sex. I think that's what messes up the whole thing. We're here not only to be providers, but to also be protectors.

### **C. Husbands Owe Partnership**

But not only is the man required to show provision and protection, but also, according to this verse—and here's the key—he is to show partnership. That doesn't mean that, if a wife is to submit to the husband, the husband is the boss of the home. No, he and his wife are copartners in the home. Look again: *"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and"*—now, watch this—*"as being heirs together of the grace of life"* (1 Peter 3:7). We are heirs together. There's to be this togetherness.

Now in our home, Joyce knows that I'm the head of the home. If she were here, she

probably would think of some times—but I cannot think of a time ever, but maybe one or two; but I can't even think of one in my mind, now—where I've ever had to say, "Honey, because I'm the head of the house, this is the way it is going to be." I'll tell you why: because we've always prayed; we've always talked; and we've always shared. If we disagree, then we back off and come again, and back off and come again, and back off and come again, until somehow we come together. Joyce knows, and I know, that if push comes to shove, and a decision has to be made, then I'll have to make it. I'll have to bear that responsibility, because she knows, as I know, that *anything with no head is dead, and anything with two heads is a freak*, amen? Anything with no head is dead, anything with two heads is a freak; but the Bible says that we are to be "*heirs together of the grace of life*" (1 Peter 3:7). Now she is a helpmeet—that is, she is a partner. That means that, as a partner, she is not to be excluded. We're to have no secrets.

Did you know that there are wives who don't even know how much money their husband makes? They don't even know what's in the bank account. They don't know where the papers—all of these things—are. No, dear friend, the Bible says that we're to be "*heirs together of the grace of life*" (1 Peter 3:7). And what some people call a nosey wife is really only a woman seeking her rightful place. Some of you fellows think you're God's gift to women. *A man who brags that he's never made a mistake has a wife who did.*

## Conclusion

I want to tell you something. The problem in the world today is men who fail to be men of God and love their wives as Christ. Most women don't mind being in submission to a man who loves her enough to die for her and shows it. The devil sold us a bill of goods, folks, and the Bible teaches that there's a magnificence of motherhood—there's a glory to femininity. The Bible does not teach that submission is inferiority, and we're not going to put this city back together, and we're not going to put our world back together, till we go back to God's intentions and God's plan.

# The Wonders of Womanhood

*By Adrian Rogers*

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**Main Scripture Text:** Titus 2:1–5

*“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”*

TITUS 2:4–5

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## Introduction

Take God’s Word, please, and find the Book of Titus—that’s back towards the back of the New Testament—the Book of Titus, and, in a moment, we’re going to share together the first five verses. Last week, we talked about true masculinity, real virility. What is a maximum man? Today, we’re going to talk about “The Wonders of Womanhood,” and the wealth of true womanhood, as we talk about “Family Values.” So all you ladies, this

is especially for you; so, pay attention. Look, if you will, in Titus chapter 2, verse 1: *“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine”* (Titus 2:1).

Now ladies, look at the word *become*. Has anybody ever told you, when you were wearing a special dress, “That dress is becoming on you”? The idea here is, “that which beautifies sound doctrine.” Just skip ahead for a moment, and look, if you will, in verse 10, for example. He says, *“Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God”* (Titus 2:10). It’s the same thought, and the word *adorn* here is from the world of cosmetics. He’s saying, “This is the way to make things beautiful, to take the Word of God, and make it a becoming thing—a beautiful thing.”

And again I want to say, just in passing, a word about cosmetics. Every now and then, people ask, “Is it wrong—a sin—to wear cosmetics?” I really don’t think so. As a matter of fact, in some instances, I think the opposite would be true. Now you can overdo anything. Some of these woman look like they have a penicillin farm, you know, on their face; look like a jack-o’-lantern—with what they do to their eyes—with the candle blown out. But I’m not talking about that. Your eyes are there to give radiance and beauty. But we’re talking here, not about your physical face, but your lifestyle, that adorns the Word of God, and brings beauty into your home.

Well, let’s continue to read: *“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed”* (Titus 2:1–5).

Now look up here, and let me tell you that the ship of state, and the ship of matrimony, has lost its moorings. And it seems like we’re at sea, without an anchor, without a compass, without a rudder, on a dark and stormy night, and we are about to go under. And homes, as God intended, and as we once knew in this nation of ours, are fast receding over the horizon. And it is a national disaster. Now it’s not that people are not saying things: we’re sailing this sinking ship in a sea of information. There are seminars, and conferences, and encounters, and counselors *ad infinitum, ad nauseam*, but, we’re not learning, because we are not going back to the Word of God.

Now listen. What I’m about to say today is coming right out of the Word of God. Satan has leveled all of the artillery of Hell at the home. Immorality, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, abortion, sterilization, women’s liberation, juvenile delinquency, crime, and sexual rebellion are all born in Hell. And all of these are aimed against the home, trying to sink the ship of holy matrimony. Now God has a plan. There are three things here I want you to learn about God’s way for the woman.

## I. The Legacy She Is to Leave

First of all, the legacy she's to leave. Secondly, the love she is to learn. And thirdly, the life she is to live. Now that's very simple. All right now, look at the legacy that she is to leave, beginning in verse 2: *"That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women"* (Titus 2:1–4). Now I just want to stop right there, and say that this word says that the older women have a ministry from God, and that is to teach the younger women. This is the legacy they are to leave. It says here very clearly that the aged women are to teach the younger women. That is God's plan. It is to go, not primarily from the pulpit, but from older mothers, and grandmothers, and *mothers in Israel*—in the church—who teach young women what God's Word has to say. The legacy she is to leave.

Now first of all, he does speak, however, to older men. Now we've already spoken to men; but, in passing, look at verse 2: *"That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience"* (Titus 2:2). There is nothing more honorable, nothing more beautiful, than a godly, older man. The Bible teaches that the gray hair is a crown of glory, and that older men are a glory to their children, and to their grandchildren. And on the other hand, there's nothing much more ugly, in my estimation, than a dirty old man who does not know God, and we've all seen them. Their eyes are just burned-out sockets of lust. Their mouths are like an open sewer. And their minds are like a garbage heap. The only thing they're looking forward to is dying in a hole in the ground. And they get meaner and more cantankerous, as they get older. You know any old men like that? God have mercy upon them. But give us a beautiful, handsome, loving old man who's walked with God: he is a thing of beauty, dignity, courage, and grace.

### A. The Older Women Must Set an Example for the Younger Women

Now that's all I want to say about verse 2, and I want us to move on to verse 3, because we're talking, primarily, about the older women. I know most of you are going to say, "I don't qualify." But look at it anyway, so, when that age ever comes, if it does come: *"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things"* (Titus 2:3).

#### 1. She Is to Be Holy in Behavior

And before we get to the teaching part, notice, here, that it says that they are to be holy in their behavior—*"that...in behavior, as becometh holiness."* I was interested in studying that this means that they are to have an aura of holiness about them. It literally infers that they are to have the fragrance of holiness. And that's what the exegetes tell

us, and the interpreters of this tell us: that it has the picture of the priest, who has gone into the sanctuary to minister, and, when he comes out, the sweet perfume of that incense is still in his garments. And as you inhale deeply, you are just in his presence. You're saying, "Boy, he's been in the holy place—he's been in the holy place." That's the idea here of this: "*as becometh holiness.*" That is, it has the aura, the smell of holiness. Have you known women like this? I have. These sweet *mothers of Israel*—just to be in their presence is like being in the holy place, just to be with God. They have the fragrance—the beauty—of Jesus Christ in their lives. They are to be holy in behavior.

## 2. She Is to Have Godly Speech

And then, it says they're not to be slanderers. Look at that. I looked this up in a number of different translations. One translation said, "Not a scandal-monger." Another said, "Not malicious gossips." Do you know the word *slanderer* is the word we get the word *devil* from? A slanderer—that's exactly what the devil is. And when you get older, ladies, let me tell you: If you are a gossip now, it's going to get worse, if you don't do something about it. Gossip is a disease that gets worse with age. Don't be a slanderer.

I heard about a woman who was in the church and was one of these gossips. And by the way, you know, gossiping is really a form of insanity, if you think about it. Because every gossip, you know, the first thing they say? They say, "Well, you know me: I don't gossip." And then, "But..." Now anybody who's doing something they don't know they're doing, that's kind of a form of insanity, isn't it? "You know me: I don't gossip." One of these gossips came forward, and told the pastor she wanted to lay her tongue on the altar. He said, "Well, it's only 40 feet long; but you can give it a try." I'm thinking about another woman who had difficulty thinking about Heaven. She said, "Well, in Heaven, how am I going to get my robe over my wings?" The fellow said, "That isn't what bothers me; it is how you are going to get your hat over your horns."

Now you're not to be a gossip, not a slanderer. When you are, you're like the devil. You're to be holy—holy in behavior, not a slanderer.

## 3. She Is to Be Free from Addictions

"*Not given to...wine*" (Titus 2:3)—that's what this says. That is, you're not to have addictions. And I'm sure that the intent of this would include cigarettes. It would include all kinds of pills, or diet drugs, other things. Don't let something enslave you. Don't let something addict you.

### B. The Older Women Must Also Teach the Younger Women

But here's the major thing that he says, in my estimation: that the older women are to teach the younger women. Look, in verse 4: "*That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not*

*blasphemed*” (Titus 2:4).

Now I want to ask you a question? Who is teaching young women today? Think about it. Who are the teachers of the young women today? I remember when we were in junior high school, that the girl that I’m married to took a course in home economics. Do they still teach home economics in school? I don’t know. If you’re a school teacher, and in your school they still teach home economics, would lift your hand? I just want to see? Do you? One... a couple here...

Thank God they do, because we’ve got a generation of girls, today, who have not been trained in the very basic things. I mean, we’ve got some who can’t boil water. Now some of them can make an ice cube that will melt in your mouth. I mean, they still have the recipe for ice cubes, but that’s about it. They don’t know anything. America today needs some godly mothers, and godly grandmothers, and *mothers in Israel* who are going to teach. Who is teaching? Is it Oprah? Is it Geraldo? Is it Brother Phil Donahue? Who is teaching? Are the universities saying to girls, “Now here is the way to be a homemaker”? They are saying to the girls, “Here is the way not to be a homemaker.” And you know it is true. Who is teaching them to be homemakers? Who is it—the soap opera? Is that where they’re going to learn it? Perhaps the greatest ministry that you can have, if you’re an older woman, is to find some young wife, and minister to her, and disciple her.

And incidentally, we have a very wonderful program here in our church. It’s called *Woman to Woman*. And the older women minister to and disciple the younger women, because many don’t have a mentor; they don’t have someone to disciple them. Now as we talk about the ministry of women, and the worth of a woman, the first thing is the legacy she is to leave. You mamas, you grandmamas, God’s Word says—not Adrian—God’s Word says that you are to teach these young women. Now if you don’t do it, you’re failing God, and they’re missing a blessing.

And incidentally, I understand that, in our women’s ministry, we need some more older women who will volunteer for this ministry. We have a lot of younger women who are coming in saying, “I want an older woman to be a surrogate mother to me, to be a teacher to me, to be a mentor to me, to help me.” And if you’re one of these *mothers in Israel*, if you’ve got enough temerity and courage just to admit that you’re an older woman, then come and volunteer. It’s a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful ministry that we have here at Bellevue Baptist Church.

But mamas, teach your daughters. Teach your daughters. They need to understand. I’m telling you, these girls get married—they don’t know anything.

One woman said to her new husband, “I’m just learning to cook. I don’t know much, but I’m already learning to make meat loaf and banana pudding.” He said, “That’s wonderful, Sweetheart. Which one is this?”

The legacy she is to leave. The older women are to teach the younger women. I'm telling you, folks, they're not getting it in the universities. They're not getting it in the magazines. They're not getting it in the grade schools. We'd better somehow find out how we're going to recapture this generation, and teach young women the primacy of homemaking.

## **II. The Love She Is to Learn**

Now here's the second thing I want you to see: not only the legacy that she's to leave, but the love she's to learn. Here's an interesting thing—look at it, if you will, again. What are the women to be taught? What are the older women to teach the younger women? *“That they may teach the young women to be sober”*—and we'll say more about that in a moment, so just skip that word *sober*—*“to love their husbands, to love their children”* (Titus 2:4). This is the love they are to learn. Now you say, “Do you have to teach women to love their husbands, and to love their children?” Indeed you do. Indeed you do. God's Word says that younger women need to be taught to love their children, and to love their husbands.

### **A. She Is to Love Her Children**

Now let's just start with loving your children, for a moment. They need to be taught how to love their children. We have a generation of mothers, today, in a strange way, who don't love their children. Some of them are putting their children to death in the womb. That's an unheard of thing. The safest place on earth ought to be a mother's womb. And it's become the most dangerous place in America: the womb. Girls need to be taught that that is wrong, wrong, wrong. Who is teaching this—to love their children before they're born, to love them after they're born?

How do you love a child? Number one, you tell them that you love them. Oh, you cannot tell them too much. You tell them that you love them; and then, not only do you tell them, but you touch them; I mean, you're constantly putting your hands on them. And I don't care how big those lugs get. Give 'em a hug, give 'em a touch, and give 'em a squeeze. Put gentle hands on them. Tell them, and touch them, and teach them. That's it. It's that simple, really. Tell them, touch them, and teach them that you love them. Let them know. Let them know, in so many ways, that they are loved. Children are not a burden. Children are a blessing. Psalm 127, verse 3, says, *“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward”* (Psalm 127:3). When you conceive in your womb, that's not a burden. That is a reward from Almighty God.

Now you study those women in the Bible. If they did not have children, they were brokenhearted. Many people today in America want children, and can't have them. They're heartbroken, and my heart goes out to them. But think about those who can

have them, and don't have them. Or, those who had conceived them, and then put them to death. Pray, and ask God to give you a love for children. Sarah, in the Bible, was barren until she was 90 years of age; and, God performed a miracle, and gave her Isaac. Rachel, in the Bible, cried out, "God, give me children, or I die" (Genesis 30:1). And God heard her prayer, and answered. And her son, Joseph, delivered a nation. Manoah's wife cried out to God, and God gave her Samson, who was a judge, who saved Israel. Ruth was barren, a widow, but she prayed, and she found mercy, and God gave her Obed, who was the grandfather of David, from whose line came the Savior. Elizabeth was stricken in age, presumed to be barren, but she prayed, and God gave to her John the Baptist. And Jesus said of him, "*There is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist*" (Luke 7:28). Hannah went into the sanctuary of God, and prayed, and wept, and said, "O God, give me a child." And God gave to Hannah, Samuel, who became the great prophet of Israel.

I'm saying all that to say this: These were great men who were born in answer to their mother's prayer. We're saying, "God give us a cure to cancer." We're saying, "God, give us the answer to AIDS." We're saying, "God help us with this problem, and that problem." How do you know that you didn't kill the cure to cancer in your womb? Some little child would have grown up to be a great physician, and to whom God had already given the answer—I mean, just like God had given these great deliverers. But suppose their mothers had not prayed, and said, "God I want to be the receptacle; I want to be the instrument to bring that child into the world."

You say, "Well, that's easy for you to say, big boy. You're not a mama; you've never given birth to a child." Well, I had to sit in a waiting room.

One man was in the waiting room, and the nurse came out, and said, "Well, sir, I have an announcement for you. You are the father of a beautiful girl." He said, "Oh, that's wonderful! I'm so grateful she'll never have to go through what I've gone through today, sitting out here."

Well, listen. I'm not the one who said that, "*children are an heritage of the LORD*" (Psalm 127:3). God said that. What a blessing children are! What a blessing motherhood is! I know their problems. Have you ever thought about how many babies we have over there right now in our nursery? It's a job for this church. We have about 1,000 preschoolers on Sunday morning. We ought to put up a sign over there in the nursery from the Scripture: "*We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed*" (1 Corinthians 15:51). I mean, it's something. It's not easy. In the reading that I have done, and what I've learned, I have learned this: that a father has influence on a child, but a mother makes the greatest impression.

## B. She Is to Love Her Husband

And these older mamas, and these older grandmamas, are to teach these young women to love their children, and to love their husband. Now don't tell me that you can't love him, because the Bible says that's something you can learn to do, just as the Bible commands husbands to love their wives. *Behind every command of God is the omnipotent power of God to carry it out.* And furthermore, how do you carry it out? Well, you learn to do it.

Now again, I'm not talking about learning about love from the soap opera, *As the Stomach Pumps*, or whatever it is. I'm talking about loving. And by the way, if you watch those soap operas, quit it. You say, "Who are you to tell me?" Well, it's just a suggestion. Quit it! You watch all that filth, that junk, that perversion. You say, "How do you know what's going on?" Well, I never watch them. But I picked up a newspaper, and it gave a synopsis of the soaps. You have never heard such a mess in your life. You're talking incest, adultery, homosexuality, rape, divorce—I mean, it is it is incredible. Now here's a woman watching that stuff all day long, and then her husband comes in. You know what? It makes her suspicious. She says, "Well, I wonder what he's been doing?" I mean, evidently, she thinks that's what the world is like, and she watches all of that stuff. You put garbage in your head, it's going to do something.

One man said, "When I come home, I wish my stove was as hot as the television." Love your husband. God didn't call you to be his conscience. I think Mrs. Billy Graham said, "My responsibility is to love Billy. It's God's responsibility to make him good." Love your husbands. Now that's the love she's to learn, okay?

## III. The Life She Is to Live

Now look—the third thing: not only the love she's to learn, but look at the life she's to live. Look, in verse 5, if you will. Here's her lifestyle. *"To be discreet, chaste"*—that word means "pure"—*"keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed"* (Titus 2:5). Now if they were ever a politically incorrect sentence in the Bible, it's this one. I mean that there are a lot of people out there—not so much in this building, there may be a few—but, out there, listening by television—they're bristling at what I have to say, right now. But again, you don't kill the messenger. I am reading this. I'm reading black print on white paper, the inspired Word of God, okay? Now really, if you don't like this, your battle is not with a man named Adrian, okay? It's with God. I mean, you take it up with God in Heaven, if you get there.

### A. Discreet

Now look at it. I'm serious. This is the Word of God—look at it. Here's the life she is to live: First of all, she is to be discreet. That means—I looked it up in different

translations—that means, “sober-minded; serious; sensible; using good judgment.” All of those are different ways that this has been translated. That is, she’s a woman who is a serious-minded person. She’s not an airhead. She can think. She’s discreet. She understands shopping. She understands nutrition. She understands bookkeeping. She understands, perhaps, decorating, physical culture. This is a woman who has not checked out her brains. That’s the reason the Bible says, “When you find a wife, you find a good thing” (Proverbs 18:22). And concerning her husband, “*She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life*” (Proverbs 31:12).

## B. Chaste

But now, look at the second description here of her lifestyle: not only discreet, but also chaste. The word *chaste* means “pure.” It doesn’t say she’s to be sexy. It doesn’t say she’s to be foxy. It says she’s to be pure: old-fashioned purity. The Bible teaches pre-marital chastity, post-marital fidelity. Say *amen*. That’s the Word of God. Virginitly, now, is—if you’re a virgin before you get married, you’re almost looked on as a pervert. The Bible says they’re to be pure. Women, save yourselves for the one you want to marry. I thank God I married a virgin. I thank God I went to the marriage altar a virgin. I wouldn’t take anything for that. God’s plan is one man for one woman “till death do them part.” How’s this going to be taught? What is God’s plan for sex education? It is not the secular school. It is the older women teaching the younger women, and it is fathers teaching sons. That’s right here in the Word of God.

I mean, the last place that kids need to learn about sex is in a in a school that has no Biblical values and no Christian values. Amoral sexual education will never work for good, only for harm. Well, somebody said, “But kids are going to fornicate; so, we better teach them how.” I mean, that’s the philosophy. “They’re going to fornicate; so, we better teach them how.”

A Mr. Herman Crowder, whom I have met, wrote a letter to the Commercial Appeal. I read it before I ever met him, and I said, “That man knows how to write.” This is what he said—and I quote: “It is perverted rationalization to argue, as many do, that, since teenage sexual activity is already a fact of life, it must be accepted and granted implicit approval by including sex education in the scholastic curriculum.” He goes on to say: “Teenage car theft is also very much a fact of life. If we applied the same syllogism to that situation, we would have to abandon our hypocritical attitude that stealing cars is wrong. We would have to accept and offer scholastic credit for it.” Well, it’s a fact of life; so, he suggests, “How about *Chop Shop 101*?” Now ladies you don’t know what *Chop Shop* is, but that’s where they take a car apart, and sell the parts. And then, he goes on to say, “And let’s not overlook another fact of life: teenage drug and alcohol abuse. Why not strip away all of the moral camouflage from that problem also? We could expand our

consciousness and our curriculum to deal with it, by the enrichment of standard chemistry courses—highly advanced and enhanced Chemistry: the stuff dreams are made of. That should do the trick very nicely.” And then, he makes this conclusion: “Once we shake loose from the restrictive bonds of right reason and morally accountable conscience, there is virtually no limit to how progressive we can become.”

There is a standard—a fixed standard—of right and wrong, and when anybody, be he politician or educator, stands up and talks about values, you have a right and a responsibility to ask this question: “Whose values?” And God deliver us from the values of a woman named Joycelyn Elders. Can you imagine—the Surgeon General of the United States? “Well, Adrian, keep moving, or you won’t get finished with your message, right now.” I’m telling you, friend, that the Bible says that the older women are to do this teaching. They are to teach the younger women to be discreet. They are to teach them to be pure.

### C. Keepers at Home

And third, they are to teach them to be obedient keepers at home. This is perhaps the most politically incorrect of all of this. Now this does not mean that she stays at home and can’t ever go anywhere else. Actually, it comes from two words. The first word is *oikos*, which means “home,” and the other word is *ergon*, which means “work.” It literally means “workers at home.” It literally means “homemaking.”

Now we have in America today 40 million working mothers—40 million working mothers. As a matter of fact, approximately one out of three mothers with children under three are in the work force. Now homemaking is a God-approved, God-ordained occupation. Put in your margin: “1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 14.” I’ll read it to you. Here’s what the great apostle said: *“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully”* (1 Timothy 5:14). Listen to it again: *“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house.”*

Now what’s wrong with that? Everything in society tells us that is passé, that is old-fashioned, that is wrong; that someone—a woman—is denigrated, if she does that: if she marries, and bears children, and guides the house. The Bible says she is to be a keeper at home. And this word *to guide* actually means she is to “rule” the house. It’s the word we get our word *despot* from. She’s to be the queen in the home. There’s no higher calling, no greater career.

Well, you say, “It’s necessary for me, Pastor Rogers, to work, so we can have more things.” Well, number one, you may not be getting as many things as you think you’re getting by two checks. A Chicago firm did an analysis, and after all the added expenses, and added taxes—I’m talking about the cars, the clothes, the quick food, the eating out,

and all of these things, and the child care, and the housekeeping paid for—a Chicago firm estimated that probably the gain out of that paycheck is about 10% of what the woman earns is the literal gain. Now what do they get for that 10%? An incredible amount of heartache, and misery, and failed homes, and delinquent children. Not always, but so many times, so many times, it's such a bad value.

Well, you say, “Adrian, that’s easy for you to say. You’ve got a steady job, and Joyce doesn’t have to work.” I know, and I’m grateful for that. But I want to tell you something: Joyce and I got married, when we were youngsters. Actually, I was almost about to turn 20. That’s very young. Joyce was 18. We’d been dating for a long, long time. We both knew God, loved God. I’d been called into the ministry. I was in school. I was working my way through school. I worked my way through school. I have a good and godly daddy. He wasn’t able to pay my way through school. I worked for four years of college, and four years of seminary, and I came out of school not owing. But my wife never worked.

We started our family, while I was in school. We did it on purpose. We wanted a family. We had a son, while I was still a college student. That son’s a minister now, serving the Lord. He was an answer to prayer. And listen. I have worked as a fruit packer, as a meat cutter, a carpenter, an elevator mechanic, a car salesman, a dishwasher, a busboy—I’ve done all that kind of work. And I’m not bragging on myself. And friend, I’m going to tell you something: There were times we had nothing extra, but we didn’t use credit cards. We got by, somehow, someway. I’m going to tell you something else: We’ve got four pretty good kids that love God, and they love Mom and Dad, and they believe in what we believe in. Now you can say, “We did it wrong,” but, I’ll tell you one thing, friend: I believe, when all else fails, follow the instructions—follow the instructions. We didn’t have some things that other people had. When we were in seminary, the other people had cars and furniture—things we didn’t have. But we had one another, and we had our kids.

And this doesn’t mean that a woman can’t do anything out of the house. Read Proverbs 31. Read about that woman there: Her activities included travel, and commerce, and agriculture, charity, and ministry. But she didn’t neglect her household. This scripture teaches that we are to see the needs of our home and our husband as primary. And whether or not you should work out of the home, the bottom line test is this: Does it help or hinder the family? I’m not talking about your goods—whether you get a bigger vacation and a bigger house.

#### **D. Good**

Now next of all, it says not only is she to be a homemaker; it says she is to be good—she is to be good. This word *good* literally means “kind; kind-hearted.” It means that—

more than it means “morally straight,” it means that she is to be a woman in whose mouth is the law of kindness (Proverbs 31:26). Every home needs a head and a heart. The husband is the head of the home. The wife is the heartbeat of the home. She’s not to be hateful and sharp.

### **E. Obedient to Her Husband**

And then, last of all, she’s to be obedient to her husband. And I want to say that headship of the husband is not dictatorship. The husband is not the dictator. He is the loving leader of the home. He is to love his wife, as Christ loved the Church. That is, he is to give himself to her as Christ gives Himself to us. And subjection, therefore, is not subjugation. It is not the husband beating his wife over the head with a Bible club in his hand. Paul explains it in another place, in Ephesians 5, verses 22 and 23: *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body”* (Ephesians 5:22–23).

Now this has nothing to do with equality. Husbands and wives are equal before God. They are of equal worth. But today, we’ve got a generation of people who are trying to blur the distinction between male and female. God made them male and female. In Christ, *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female”* (Galatians 3:28). That is, in Christ, the ground around the cross is level. But the devil, under the guise of making men and women equal, has tried to make them the same, and to destroy the God-given differences.

And a woman who refuses God’s plan, let me tell you the difficulty she’s going to have.

#### **1. The Rebellious Wife Will Have Difficulty with God**

First of all, she’s going to have difficulty with God. Now I think most of you are going to have to agree that what I’ve been preaching today is out of the Word of God, hasn’t it been? I mean, I’m just reading this, and trying to explain it. I’m not inventing it; I’m just reading it. Now there’ll be a sense of rebellion against God. You’ll have difficulty with God.

#### **2. The Rebellious Wife Will Have Difficulty with Her Husband**

And secondly, you will have difficulty with your husband. Rather than being his completer, you’ll become his competitor. That’s not what God intended.

#### **3. The Rebellious Wife Will Have Difficulty with Her Children**

Number three: you’ll have difficulty with your children. If you don’t learn to be under, you’ll never be able to be over. If you’re not under God-given authority, God cannot give you authority. You’ll have difficulty with your children.

#### **4. The Rebellious Wife Will Have Difficulty with Herself**

Next of all, you will have difficulty with yourself, because your deepest, most God-given instincts will not be met. God made a bird to fly in the sky. God made a fish to swim in the sea. And they're happy, when they do what God made them to do. When you take that fish out of the sea, and put him in a tree, he's an unhappy fish. He may think he wants to be there, but that's not his place. Or, take that bird out of the sky, and put him in the sea—he's an unhappy bird.

#### **Conclusion**

I'm telling you that God has a wonderful, wonderful plan. And if you don't think God's plan is best, then I want you to look at today's society, and tell me, since we've jettisoned the Word of God, since we've had the sexual revolution, since we've had so-called *liberation*, let me ask you a question? Is this the society that you think that God has planned and what God wanted? God has a plan. And when all else fails, read the directions.

Father, thank You for Your Word. We love You and praise You. And God help us to get back to family values. In Your holy name. Amen.

# What Now?

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: July 13, 1997**

**Main Scripture Text: Titus 2:1–5**

*“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”*

TITUS 2:3–5

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## Introduction

Would you be finding Titus chapter 2? The title of our message: “What Now?” “What Now?” We live in a needy generation, and the ship of matrimony is at sea on a dark and stormy night, like a ship without a mast, a sail, a compass, or a rudder; being swamped, about to go under. America’s homes are in trouble, and we’re drowning in a sea of information. All over there are books, booklets, seminars, meetings, conferences,

encounters, counselors. I listen to some of them on the radio, and I look for the barf bag when I listen to some of the information that is given out. It comes at infinitum nauseam. Most of it is not based on the Word of God, and these things are contributing to the homicide of the home.

We have a group of militant feminists who have banded themselves together under an organization called *NOW, National Organization of Women*. And, I'm not here to critique them entirely. I want to say, just in passing, that the materials that I have read and seen break my heart, because these women, while taking a stand for many things that may be good and fine, also have taken philosophical stands that open the door to immorality, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, abortion. And, I believe these things, as night follows day, lead to juvenile delinquency, crime, and sexual rebellion. Now, these women, many of them, I believe, are motivated for what they consider to be a good cause. They're reacting against the abuse of women, and women have been abused down through the centuries. And, certainly, everything that can be done needs to be done to stop that abuse. But, these are they who, it seems to me, have burned down the barn to kill the rats. And, the situation is worse—not better—as a result of the militant feminists. Now, now what? Well, let's look in the Word of God and find out what is what after NOW has come and gone from our city.

Titus chapter 2, verse 1: *“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed”* (Titus 2:1–5). May I just say, “Thus saith the Lord.” Don't come to me afterward and say, “I disagree with you,” because I am the Western Union boy. I don't write the Scripture; I try to deliver it. Take it up with God.

Now, let's look at this, beginning in verse 1. He's talking about doctrine that is becoming. And, the word *become*—it means, literally, “to beautify.” Look at it again: *“speak thou the things which become sound doctrine”* (Titus 2:1). Actually, the word is *adorn*, or “to beautify.” It's the word for *cosmetics*. When a woman wears a dress that is attractive, they might say that dress is “becoming to you.” That's what he's talking about here. He's talking about beautifying truth. You get the same idea down in verse 10: *“Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things”* (Titus 2:10). So, he is saying that a woman is beautiful within and without. Certainly, there's nothing wrong with wearing cosmetics. That's not what he's talking about here, when he's talking about the adornment and becoming a beautiful woman. I frankly think that it's not a sin for women to wear cosmetics; I think it may be a

sin for some not to. Now, I've seen some I think who have overdone it, like they're, you know, that they are growing penicillin on their face. I saw a lady the other day. She had on so much mascara she looked like a jack-o-lantern with the candle blown out. Well, you say, "You're not going to get along very well with the women tonight, Brother Pastor." Well, just laughing a little bit, having a good time here. Lighten up.

## I. What Is God's Plan for the Ladies?

What does God say that a woman is to be like? What is God's plan for the ladies? Now what?

### A. They Are to Leave a Legacy

Well, first of all, let's think about the legacy that an aged woman is to leave. Notice he says here that the aged women (verse 3)... I'm going to skip the part about the aged men. That's not because I am not concerned about the men. We're just talking about the ladies tonight. *"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the younger women"* (Titus 2:3-4).

Now, there's nothing more beautiful than an aged woman. And, sometimes, women try to hide their age. My precious momma has always tried to hide her age. And, you won't tell anybody, but, in just a very short time, she'll be ninety years of age. I was talking to her on the phone today, and she is a delightful person; but, she has always tried to hide her age. When I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention, somebody interviewed her and said, "Well, Mrs. Rogers, how old are you?" And, she said, "Well, the journey of life has been so pleasant that I've not stopped to count the milestones." Well, she ought to run for political office somewhere. I said to her, "Momma, what difference does it make if they know how old you are?" She said, "I don't care if they know; I just don't want to know."

He's talking here about the aged women, and the Bible has much to say about the beauty and the grace of old age in both men and women. Have you ever noticed that what is in the cup settles in the bottom? And, when people get older and they've known the Lord, there's nothing more sweet, nothing more beautiful than a person who has let the grace of God settle in the bottom of the cup. Conversely, there's nothing meaner, uglier, more obstreperous and hard to get along with, more cantankerous than an ugly old person. That's right. I'm not talking about ugly in outward appearance. I'm talking about a snippety, snappity, grouchy, cantankerous person. You see, an old man, for example: He's a wicked old man. His eyes are like burned out sockets of lust. His mind is like the city dump. And, his mouth is like an open sewer. Have you ever been around an old guy like that? Dirty old men. All they look forward to is more pain and then a hole in the ground. They have no love for anybody. Boy, you have to feel sorry for people

who don't know Jesus. They don't know how to grow old gracefully. An old man ought to be—his grey hair—be a crown of glory. He ought to be the glory of his children and his grandchildren. He ought to be a reservoir of wisdom and a fountain of love. And, I hope you'll be that way as you get older, because I'm going to tell you what's in the cup settles in the bottom. And, it's true with women also.

### **B. They Are to Live a Holy Life**

Now, he says that, here, that the aged women are to set an example. Look, if you will, in verse 3. He says they are to *“be in behaviour as becometh holiness”* (Titus 2:3). And, this word *holy*, here, scholars tell us, is a word...the connotation of this particular Greek work is as a priest coming out of a temple that still has the fragrance of the incense in his garments. That's the holy life that we ought to live, whether we're male or female. The more we walk with Jesus, there ought to be that holy fragrance.

### **C. They Are to Not Be Slanderers**

And then, this verse says they're not to be slanderers. You know, when you get old, you have to say, “Lord, watch my tongue—and especially that I don't criticize every thing, everybody; that I don't become the last word about everything.” The word *slanderer*, here, is actually the word that we get our word *devil* from. The devil is a slanderer. And, again, God deliver me from women, young or old—men, young or old—who've taken up the habit of slander. One woman who was this way in a particular church, I'm told, came to the pastor, and said, “Pastor, I want to lay my tongue on the altar.” He said, “Well, it's only forty inches long, but I think it'll be long enough. Go ahead and put it there, on the altar.” Another woman was talking about going to Heaven. She said, “Well, what bothers me is how I'm going to get my robe over my wings.” He said, “Well, I wonder...” Her husband said, “How are you going to get your hat over your horns?” Now, not slanderers.

### **D. They Are Not to Be Given to Much Wine**

But, here's what...*“not given to much wine”* (Titus 2:3). She's not to be addicted to things. We have more women alcoholics today than ever before, and we have women today who are addicted to things they didn't have in Bible times, like cigarettes, and pills, and diet drugs. They're addicted to things.

### **E. They Are to Be Teachers of Good Things**

But, he's talking, here, about holy behavior in older women. But now, here's the point that I really want to tighten up on. Look in verse 4. He says, *“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed”* (Titus 2:4–5). Now, I'm talking about the legacy that older women

are the leave, the legacy they leave when they're old.

The older women in our church, and the older women in Christian society, are to be teaching the younger women. Now, I want to ask you a question—now, you think about it, for a moment: Who is teaching younger women today? Who is teaching people like these pre-teeners behind me, and the high schoolers, and the college women? Who are teaching them to be mothers, homemakers? Where are they going to learn home economics? He says to teach them “good things” (Titus 2:3). The word literally means “family values.” Who’s teaching these things? We need, in America, some godly grandmothers and mothers who are teaching their daughters to be homemakers. These girls are not learning about homemaking in the teen magazines; they’re learning about sexual encounters. They’re not learning about homemaking from MTV. They’re not learning it from Geraldo and Oprah. They’re not learning it from rock music.

Where are girls today learning to be homemakers? Do you know that the greatest ministry that you mothers in Israel can have is to teach your daughters and to teach other daughters how to be homemakers? Now, when we were in school years ago, when the Earth’s crust first hardened, the children, the boys and girls, were taught something about homemaking. There were courses in home economics. We need, today, women to teach younger women these things. Folks, they have not got a clue! Some of them, when they get married, don’t know how to boil water. One woman was serving her newlywed husband their first meal. And, he took a couple of bites and said, “Ah, do you specialize in anything?” She said, “Yes, I specialize in banana pudding and meatloaf.” He said, “Which is this?” Who’s going to teach these women? Somebody has to teach them. Now, look at this: He says to the older women, “They may teach the young women” (Titus 2:4). So, if you’re older, this is the legacy you’re to leave when you’re old.

## **II. The Lesson Ladies Are to Learn When You’re Young**

Now, let’s learn the lesson you’re to learn when you’re young. What are they to teach the younger women? Well, look in verse 4: *“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed”* (Titus 2:4). I submit to you, if you were to stand up and read those two verses at the NOW convention, some of them might have a stroke. Seriously! This is unthinkable in a crowd like that; and yet, it is the pure Word of God. It is the doctrine, the Word of God. Now, what should older women be teaching younger women?

### **A. To Love Their Children**

First of all, to love their children, to love their children. You know, the Bible says, “In the

last days, people will be without natural affection” (2 Timothy 3:3). And, that literally means “without family love.” Older women need to teach younger women how to love their children. How do you love your children? Well, you tell them that you love them. You cannot tell them too much. You tell them. You touch them. You hug them. Put your hands on them and enfold them. And then, you teach them through prayer, and Bible study, and discipline. All of these things are love.

We hear so much about child abuse. Abusers generally come from an abusive family. We need older women to teach younger women simply to love their children. You know, one of the crying shames in the Twentieth Century in this city and every city is that women today had rather have creature comforts—material things, a finer house, a bigger car, more exotic vacations—than to have children. They think of children as an imposition. They don’t have natural love for children. Psalm 127, verses 3 through 5 says: *“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are the children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them”* (Psalm 127:3–5). There’s something basically wrong with a society that sees children as burdens rather than blessings.

And, I’m telling you, there’s something drastically wrong in America when we can put a child to death in its mother’s womb. The safest place on Earth—what has meant to be the safest place—is now the most dangerous place. Our hearts go out to mothers who want children and cannot have them. I said this a few months ago in a sermon: A lady wrote me a letter. She said, “I heard you say that in a sermon, and God convicted me, because I was making plans for an abortion, a baby that I was carrying.” I met this woman and prayed with her just recently. She’s now going to bring that baby to term, and that baby is going to be adopted by some loving parents. My heart goes out to those who want children and cannot have them. If you know somebody who doesn’t want a baby, there are people who want that baby. There are people who will love that baby. And, if you want a baby and don’t have a baby, before you adopt a baby, let me suggest that you pray and ask God to give you a baby.

Sarai was barren until she was ninety years of age, and God gave Sarah birth to Isaac. Rachel cried, “Give me children, or I die.” And, God heard her prayer, and her son Joseph delivered the nation. Manoah’s wife gave birth to Samson, who was a judge in Israel, and also delivered the nation. Ruth was barren, but she found mercy in the sight of God, became the mother of Obed, who was the grandfather of David, and from whose line came the Savior. Elizabeth was old and stricken in age, yet she prayed, along with Zechariah, her husband, Zecharias; and, God gave them a child who was John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hannah prayed with God so much that Eli the priest thought that she was drunk in praying and asking God for a baby. And, God gave her a baby, little Samuel, who was the great prophet of

Israel.

Pray and ask God to give you a child. I think of all of these children who were born in answer to prayer and how they have changed the face of the world. I wonder if the child that had the cure to cancer, the cure to AIDS; I wonder if the next Billy Graham; I wonder if the next president of the United States, who could lead us a godly president, has not been put to death in its mother's womb. Who knows? We need to learn to love children. It's not easy to be a mother. It's not glamorous. But, a father may have influence on a child, but the mother makes the greatest impressions, especially in infancy. So, what are older women to do? They are to teach younger women to love with children. That's what it says right here: "teach them to love their children" (Titus 2:4).

### **B. To Love Their Husbands**

Also, it says, "Teach them to love their husbands" (Titus 2:4). Now, she's to be taught to love her husband. That means that she can learn to love her husband. Don't get the idea that love is something that you fall into or fall out of. The Bible commands husbands to love their wives. And, if a man tells me he doesn't love his wife, I say, "Well, learn to love her. Choose to love her. You can love her." Anything God commands you to do, you can do. If God told me to jump over this building, that would mean He would either enable me to jump over this building, or He's an unfair God. God will never command you to do something that you cannot do. And, and a wife is to learn to love her husband.

Now, when I talk about love, I'm not talking about soap opera love. And, you sit at home all day watching "As the Stomach Pumps" or whatever these things are. I'm not talking about that kind of love. As a matter of fact, I want to tell you ladies something, and men too—I think it's most of the ladies who watch these operas, these soap operas. Do they still call them *soap operas*? I don't know—Don't watch those things. You are going to fill your mind with all kind of garbage. Everybody on those things is having some kind of an affair, some kind of a kink, some kind of a perversion. And, you watch that, and, before long, you're going to be wondering if your husband is acting that way, or if your children are acting that way. It just fills your mind with all kinds of garbage. Where are we going to learn what love is?

Now, women: It's your responsibility, young women. This is what you're to learn: to love your husband. Ruth Graham said, "It's your responsibility to love your husband; it's God's responsibility to make him good." So, he says here that the older women are to teach the younger women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children. Now, how is the younger woman and the older woman to live? Well, notice in verse 5—continue—"To teach...to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their

own husbands” (Titus 2:4–5). Now, let’s just take those one at a time.

### C. To Be Discreet

First of all, to be discreet. The word *discreet*, here, means “sober-minded, serious, sensible.” It means “using good judgment.” Happy is the man who has a wife who uses good judgment. God has blessed me—if I may boast a little bit in the Lord—God has blessed me with a wise woman. She’s wise in shopping. She’s wise in nutrition. She’s wise in bookkeeping. She is wise in physical culture. She is wise in keeping the house. And, I’m a blessed man to have a woman like that. The Bible says, “*Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing*” (Proverbs 18:22). Now, who’s going to teach these women, the younger women, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, to be a wise woman?

### D. To Be Chaste

And then, it says, “*To be...chaste*” (Titus 2:5). Now, that word *chaste* literally means “to be pure.” The Bible puts such a great emphasis upon sexual purity. It doesn’t say to teach her to be sexy. It doesn’t say to teach her to be foxy. Teach her to be pure. I want to say to the kids in the choir, “Keep yourself pure. Save yourself for the one you’re going to marry.” We hear so much today about sex education in the schools. The last place on Earth that children need to learn about sex is in a non-moral, amoral context. Sexual education will never work for good, only work for harm, unless it is coupled with biblical values. Now folks, we just need to understand that.

We have a member, Mr. Herman Crouder, who wrote something to *The Commercial Appeal*, some time ago. It was so good. I clipped it and copied it. I have it here. He was talking about sex education, and here’s what he said (in part): “It is perverted rationalization to argue, as many do, that since teenage sexual activity is already a fact of life, it must be accepted and granted implicit approval by including sex education in the scholastic curriculum.” Then, he went on to say, “Teenage car theft is also very much a fact of life. If we applied the same syllogism to that situation, we would have to abandon our hypocritical attitude that stealing cars is wrong. We would have to accept and offer scholastic credit for it. How about Chop Shop 101?” And then, he goes on to say, “And, let’s not overlook another fact of life: teenage drug and alcohol abuse. Why not strip away all of the moral camouflage from that problem also? We could expand our consciousness in our curriculum to deal with it by enrichment of standard chemistry courses, highly advanced and enhanced chemistry—the stuff dreams are made of. This would do the trick very nicely.” And then, he goes on to say, “Once we shake loose from the restricted bonds of right reason and morally accountable conscience, there is virtually no limit to how ‘progressive’ we can become.”

Now, they’re teaching kids in school values clarification, where, basically, they

choose their own values; or, they say, “Well, we’re going to bring values into the school.” I always ask, “Whose values?” The values of somebody like the former Clinton cabinet person, Jocelyn Elders—those values? Whose values are we going to teach? I’m telling you, folks, it is time that the aged women taught the younger women what the Bible says that we are to do.

### **E. To Be Keepers at Home**

And then, here’s one, I’ll tell you, that would cause them at NOW to blow a casket: to teach them to be keepers at home. Now, look at that: “*keepers at home*” (Titus 2:5). These words *keepers at home* literally comes from two Greek words—one meaning “house,” and the other means “work.” It means “workers at home.” Did you know that we have, in America, forty to fifty million working mothers in America? One out of three mothers with children under three has a full-time job. Yet, being a homemaker is a God-approved occupation. Paul told Timothy—1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 14: “*I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully*” (1 Timothy 5:14). And the word *guide*, here—“guide the house,”—actually, is a Greek word, *despoteo*. It’s the word we get our word *despot* from; it means “ruler.” She is to rule the house. She is the queen of the home. There is no higher calling, no great career, than being a homemaker.

Now listen, don’t write me afterward and tell me something. I don’t want to hear it. There is no higher calling, no greater career, than to be a homemaker. If you’re a daddy, and you’ve got a real bright girl—she could be a doctor; she could be a lawyer; she could be an entrepreneur—if that’s what she is, fine. But, don’t wish that for her as a substitute for being a homemaker. Don’t think that she has missed the boat. Don’t think that she has missed out. Don’t think that, “My daughter, who could do this,” and, “My daughter, who could do that,” or, “My daughter, who could be this,” or, “My daughter, who could be that.” Friend, let me tell you, if your precious daughter is a mother and a homemaker, there is no higher, no greater calling or career, that she could have. Now, I’m not saying that it is wrong for a woman to have another career, but I’m saying that the highest career, the highest calling, is to be a homemaker and a mother.

And, I know, we have a lot of working mothers today. They are homemakers, and they’re working outside the home. They’re trying to do both of these things at the same time. And, some of them are doing a fairly good job. But, a Chicago firm—and I’m not talking about a religious organization—figured out how much the average working mother is actually gaining by the time the expenses of two people working in the family—the other car, the extra insurance, the meals out, the quick meals at home, the extra dress, the income tax, all of these other things—are taken out. This firm estimated

that the working mother is really gaining about ten percent of what she earns. They're really banking only about ten percent. The rest of it takes in order to keep her out and to keep her going. And, the sad thing is that what she may be missing during all of this: the joy of being at home, the joy of being there to welcome her husband when he comes home, the joy of raising those children.

You say, "But we need that ten percent." Well, if you need that ten percent, my hat is off to you. I mean, if you have to have it to put clothes on the children, to put a roof over their head, to put shoes on their feet, put food on the table. I mean, if you have to do it, my hat is off to you; my heart is out to you. But folks, I want to tell you, you'd better consider something: You might be making a bad bargain. You might be giving a whole lot to get a very little. You say, "Well Adrian, what do you know about it? You're the big-shot pastor of the church. What do you know about it? You don't know how I live." I want to tell you something, folks: When I got married, Joyce and I went off on our honeymoon with fifty bucks, fifty dollars. That's what we had for a honeymoon. I went to school for almost eight years married. I thought at that time, when we were just kids, and we got married very young. I was still nineteen, about to turn twenty. We got married. I wanted my wife to stay home. I have worked, done so many things, in order to keep her at home. We decided to have our family while I was in school. We didn't have... Our babies were not accidents. They were planned. They were wanted. They were prayed for. We wanted our family to begin—our children.

I could not tell you the jobs that I have done. I have worked crawling under houses on my belly like a snake, breathing dust, inspecting for termites. I worked as a fruit packer in a packinghouse. I worked as a construction worker. I've worked as an elevator mechanic. I've worked as a car salesman. I've worked as a butcher. I've worked as a stock clerk. I have worked at all kinds of jobs, night and day. I'll tell you this much: By God's grace, we went to school; we paid our bills; we had our children; we graduated; we got out of school without owing anybody anything, and my wife stayed home with the babies. Now, it wasn't easy; it wasn't easy. But, I'm going to tell you something: It was worth it! Now, I don't want to... Our kids are not perfect. My kids are not perfect, because they had to play with the deacon's kids, but I want to tell you something; I want to tell you something: We've got four kids who love God, who love one another, and who love their mom and dad. And, they know their mom and dad are not perfect, but they know we're not phonies.

Now, now, I'm going to tell you something, folks: There comes a time when we need to think about what really matters and where real values are. Now, does that mean that if a woman—when the Bible says that she's to be a keeper at home—does that mean she can't have a job outside the house? No! As a matter of fact, if you'll read Proverbs chapter 31—the ideal woman. Don't read it, right now. The Bible talks about her, what

all she did. Well, you talk about a bionic woman! Travel, commerce, agriculture. And, she was an entrepreneur. Charity—she did it all! But, she did not neglect her household. She saw her husband and her children as primary. And, a test as to whether or not you ought to do that thing that you do is just simply this: Does it help or hinder the family? Does it help or hinder the home? Now, “teach the women,” he says, “to love their husbands. Teach them to love their children. Teach them to be keepers at home” (Titus 2:4–5). That means “homemakers.”

#### **F. To Be Good**

Teach them to be good. That’s what he goes on to say in verse 5: “*good*” (Titus 2:5). This word *good* doesn’t mean like “good: not doing bad.” But, the word—the Greek word—literally means “kindhearted”—not just morally straight; “to have a good heart.” Every home needs a heart as well as a head. Our home would be a mess if it weren’t for Joyce, who’s helping me to be sensitive. She’d say, “Adrian, you hurt so-and-so’s feelings.” I said, “Oh no, I didn’t hurt their feelings.” She said, “Yes, you did. They misunderstood you.” Or, “Adrian, you need to think about the children here, Adrian.” I said, “Aw...” She said, “No, Adrian, listen...” And, she’s right; she’s right. I have to listen, because God has given her a good heart. Teach the girls to be good—not hateful, not spiteful. Let the law of kindness be in their mouths.

#### **G. To Be Obedient to Their Husbands**

Now, here’s the one, folks, that, at the NOW convention, they really don’t like. Here it is. Let’s just look at it in verse 4. He says here—excuse me, verse 5: “*obedient to their own husbands*” (Titus 2:5). Wow! You talk about something politically incorrect today: “*obedient to their own husbands*” (Titus 2:5). There are some girls, you know, when they get married today, they don’t want you to say, “To promise, to obey.” They want to take that out. Well, you’ll have to get somebody else to do your marrying for you, then. I’m not going to take it out of the Word of God. The Bible says that women are to obey their husbands (Titus 2:5). Now, the headship of the husband doesn’t mean that he is the dictator. It talks, really, here, about loving leadership. Submission is not subjugation. When the Bible says, “The husband is the head of the home,” that doesn’t mean that he is a top sergeant, using the Bible as a club to beat his wife over the head with.

Paul explained this in another place, in Ephesians chapter 5, verses 22 and 23. He says, “*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church*” (Ephesians 5:22–23). Well, what is Christ to the Church? Not the dictator, not the boss—He is the loving leader who protects us, and watches over us, and blesses us. And so, while women are required to submit, the reason is that the husband is the head. That doesn’t mean for her punishment; it means for her protection. God... When the Bible says, “*The*

*husband is the head,*” it’s not talking about the husband’s privileges; it’s talking about the husband’s responsibilities (Ephesians 5:23). That doesn’t mean that the man is better than a woman, superior to a woman. One man said, “I used to subscribe to the philosophy of male superiority until my wife cancelled my subscription.” The husband is not superior, but he is the head. Just as the head of Christ is God, the head of the woman is the man. The Lord Jesus is not inferior to God the Father, and the woman is not inferior to the man.

## **Conclusion**

Well, I’ve got to wrap all of this up, and I’ve just got to come to a conclusion.

But, let me say this to the precious ladies who met down there, at the Pyramid, and the ladies who are in this place: If you fail to read the Word of God and obey the Word of God, you’re going to have trouble on four fronts. And, I’ll just tell you what they are.

### **A. Trouble in Your Relationship with God**

First of all, you’re going to have trouble in your relationship with God. Now, I want to remind you that what I have just read to you is the Word of God. Take all of my comments out of it. You say, “Well, I don’t agree with what you said here, or what you said there.” Well then, forget all of that and just go right back and read the Scripture, just the pure Scripture. And, if you don’t agree with this, you’re going to have trouble with God, because it will really be a rebellion—not against Adrian, not against the Baptists, not against Promise Keepers, not against this or that; it is a rebellion against Almighty God. You’re going to have trouble with God.

### **B. Trouble with Your Husband**

Secondly, you’re going to have trouble with your husband. Rather than being his completer, you’re going to be his competitor; and, you’re going to find out that there’s something drastically wrong in your marriage. You’re trying to make it work in a way that God never intended for it to work.

### **C. Trouble with Your Children**

Thirdly, you’re going to have problems with you children, because if you don’t learn to be under those things that God has put over you, you will never be over those things that God wants to be under you. And, a wife with a rebellious spirit toward her husband is not going to have the power of God to raise her children in the way that God wants her to raise her children.

### **D. Trouble with Yourself**

And, last of all, you’re going to have problems with yourself, because your deepest needs and your God-given instincts are not going to be met.

# God's Amazing Grace

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: June 25, 1989**

**Main Scripture Text: Titus 2:11–14**

*“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,”*  
TITUS 2:11

## Outline

Introduction

- I. Sovereign Grace
- II. Saving Grace
- III. Securing Grace
- IV. Strengthening Grace
- V. Sufficient Grace
- VI. Surviving Grace

Conclusion

## Introduction

Would you take God's Word this morning, please, and turn to Titus chapter 2? In a moment, we'll begin reading in verse 11.

Before we begin to read, I want to tell you what happened many years ago. There was a young man named John, a boy whose mother died when John was six years old. He was orphaned from his mother. His father was a sailor, a sea-faring man. He sailed the Mediterranean. And when John was only 11, he began to sail with his father. He himself became a sailor at the age of 11. John fell in with the wrong crowd. He got into so much wickedness, sin, vileness, and debauchery that his own father disowned him. John sank lower and lower into vileness and sin.

Finally, he got into the slave trade. He began to be a slaver. He sold slaves, and delivered them to England. And then, after a while, John went down so deep into debauchery and sin that he himself became a slave of slaves. He hit the very bottom. Sane godly people saw John, and began to witness to him. They gave him something to read. Among the things they gave him to read was a book by Sir Thomas à Kempis called *The Imitation of Christ*. He read it, almost in jest, but he read it. And the Spirit of God began to work in his heart and touched his heart.

And then, one day, while he was on deck of a ship, there was a great storm that came—a violent storm—and it looked like the ship was going to go down. Newton was on the deck of that ship—John Newton—when a wave came and swept him off the deck

of the ship into the ocean. It swept him into the briny deep ocean. In a moment—a horrible and terrifying moment—his entire life just passed before him. He saw his wickedness, and he saw his sin. He felt himself sinking down into hell. And then, another wave came, and flayed him up, and put him right back on the deck of that ship. It was enough. It brought him to salvation. He cried out to God for mercy. He was gloriously saved.

At the age of 39, God called John Newton into the ministry. He became a mighty warrior for Christ, a mighty preacher of the gospel. And he wrote that song that we love to sing: “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.” My dear friend, I want to tell you, his song is the song of every blood-bought, redeemed child of God. Once I was blind, but now, by the grace of God—the amazing, wonderful grace of God—I see.

Now I want to talk to you about the grace of God. And our scripture comes from Titus chapter 2 and verse 11. Listen to it. The Bible says, *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”* (Titus 2:11–14). “God’s amazing grace.”

Now what is grace? Grace is God giving to us what we do not deserve. It is God’s unmerited favor shown toward sinful man. And you know, it’s so contrary to human wisdom. And it’s so contrary to good ole’ Americanism, as we know it.

For example, you finish this sentence for me: We make money the old-fashioned way... We earn it. That’s right. All right, finish this sentence for me: There’s no such thing as a... That’s right: free lunch. No such thing as a free lunch. Or try this one: God helps those who... help themselves, right? I mean, that’s just the way that’s bred into us. You get what you pay for. But grace is contrary to all of human wisdom. And it is, indeed, amazing grace.

## I. Sovereign Grace

I want us to think about God’s amazing grace, under several headings. The very first thing I want you to see is sovereign grace. Got it? Amazing grace is sovereign grace. Look at verse 11. It says, *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation”* (Titus 2:11). It is the grace of God, it is sovereign grace, and it brings salvation. Now remember, grace is God giving me what I need, not what I deserve. There are three big words. One is justice, the other is mercy, and the other is grace.

What is justice? Justice is God giving us what we do deserve. If any of us get justice,

we'll go to hell—every one of us. Justice is God giving us what we do deserve. Thank God that something has happened, and that justice can be ameliorated. But mercy—the second word—is God not giving us what we deserve. And that's wonderful that we don't have to go to hell. We receive mercy. But grace is God giving us what we don't deserve. That is his love, his fullness, his forgiveness, and his righteousness, that is imputed to us. Thank God for the grace of Almighty God. And it brings salvation. That is, we didn't seek God. God sought us. *"We love him, because he first loved us"* (1 John 4:19). It didn't start in the goodness of man. It starts in the grace of God. Not in the merit of man, but in the mercy of God. It is sovereign grace. Hallelujah for such a God!

The Bible calls Him a gracious God, in Psalm 86:15: *"But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious."* So put this in your heart, first of all, friend. This grace is sovereign grace. God brings it. It is the grace of God that brings salvation.

## II. Saving Grace

But the second thing I want you to see is that this amazing grace—that is, sovereign grace—is amazing grace that is saving grace. *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation"* (Titus 2:11).

Now there's no other way to be saved, apart from grace. There are some people who think that you're saved by what you don't do. There are other people who think that you're saved by what you do. But both are wrong. Friend, salvation is not spelled *don't*, and it's not spelled *do*; it's spelled *done*—d-o-n-e—*done*. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, he bowed his head, and he said, *tetelestai*. That means, "It is finished." It is paid in full. And salvation, therefore, is a gift. As the Bible says, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Now those people who think that salvation is spelled *don't*, to them salvation is subtraction—that, if they can get certain things out of their lives, then they'll be saved. And they have about a dirty dozen. And they say, "You know, if I don't do these things, then I'm a Christian." Hey, folks, if that's the definition of a Christian, then everybody in a rest home is a Christian. For, they don't do those things. I mean, they don't do much. And so if that's a definition of a Christian—just not doing something—then why, even some people in prison are Christians.

No, no. It's not spelled *don't*. And it's not spelled *do*. Salvation does not come by works of righteousness. The Bible says, *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us"* (Titus 3:5). As a matter of fact, that's right across the page, in Titus chapter 3 and verse 5: *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through*

*Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace” (Titus 3:5-7).*

If you could be saved by works of righteousness, if you could be good, and be saved, then Calvary was the blunder of the ages. God made a colossal mistake, when He allowed Jesus Christ to die on the cross to do for us what we could not have done for ourselves. Galatians 2:21 says, *“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”* What he meant by that is, if you could be saved by commandment-keeping, Jesus died for nothing.

Friend, listen. You’re saved by grace. And Calvary proves that you’re saved by grace. Now every now and then, somebody wants to say, “Well, yes, you’re saved by the grace of God. But you’ve got to do your part. God does His part, and you do your part. God forgives your sins, by his grace; but now, it’s up to you, by good works, to do your part. And if you do your part—good works—and God does His part—grace—then you’ll be saved. And so they try to mingle grace and works. Friend, when you mingle grace and works, you destroy grace.

Now listen to this verse of Scripture—Romans 11 and verse 6—listen to it: *“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work”* (Romans 11:6). What does that say? Just make up your mind, folks. Either you’re going to be saved by grace, or you’re going to be saved by works. But you can’t mingle the two. And we know that no one can be saved by works. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast”* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Let me show you how it works. Grace—“God’s riches at Christ’s expense”—g-r-a-c-e—grace is God saying, “I love you; I want to save you.” And God takes the initiative, and God reaches down out of Heaven. God sends His Son. God extends His hand of grace to sinful man. Now *“For by grace are ye saved through...”* what? Faith—f-a-i-t-h—“forsaking all, I trust Him.” “God’s riches at Christ’s expense”—faith: “forsaking all, I trust Him.”

All right, here’s the way salvation is: God says, “I love you; I want to save you.” And God reaches down to man. Man says, “I need to be saved. I can’t save myself. I want to be saved. I believe You.” And man puts his hand of faith in God’s hand of grace. “For by grace through faith are you saved.” You put your hand of faith in God’s hand of grace, and, at that moment, you become a child of God—when you trust the Lord Jesus Christ. *“For by grace are ye saved.”* It is *“the grace of God that bringeth salvation”* (Titus 2:11). So many people don’t understand that. They think that, somehow, they can be saved by good works. But the Bible says, *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration”* (Titus 3:5).

Do you know what’s wrong with so many people? Folks, they’ve been starved and

ironed, but they've never been washed. I mean, they they've just gone through religion, but they haven't had the washing of regeneration. We're justified by the grace of God. The politician says, "Legislate your way out." The military man says, "Fight your way out." The liar says, "Bluff your way out." The materialist says, "Buy your way out." The alcoholic says, "Drink your way out." Jesus says, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life*" (John 14:6). The only way is the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank God for the amazing grace of God.

Friend, amazing grace is sovereign grace. It is the grace of God that brings salvation. Amazing grace is saving grace. The only thing that removes your guilt is the grace of God. Did you know, if you don't understand grace, you'll never be relieved of guilt? Do you know the difference between psychology and salvation? You go to the psychiatrist, and do you know what he deals with? The psychiatrist deals with guilt feelings. Grace deals with guilt. See, that's the difference. The psychiatrist tries to deaden the pain. He says, "What you've got, is a guilt feeling." Oh no. Friend, the guilt feeling is only the result of the guilt. There's only one thing that can take away that guilt. And that is the grace of God.

### III. Securing Grace

The thing I want you to notice about this grace is, not only is this grace saving grace, but, dear friend, it is securing grace. Amazing grace is securing grace, because the Bible says, "*For by grace are ye saved*" (Ephesians 2:8); "*the grace of God that bringeth salvation*" (Titus 2:11). And both times, it refers to a fixed, eternal work that is done, never to be undone. When we get saved, we're not put on probation. We're saved once and for all. And so amazing grace is securing grace.

Dear friend, you're saved by grace, and you're kept by grace. Now if you were saved by works, you'd have to be kept by works. Some people get the idea that, when you are saved, God gives you a new start, and says, "Now if you mess up again, you're going to lose it." But oh no, dear friend, if that is necessary to be saved on through to the end, I wouldn't be saved, and neither would you. As I've told you before, *I wouldn't trust the best 15 minutes I ever lived to get me to Heaven, much less some of my worst ones. But the grace that saves me is the grace that keeps me.* You're saved by grace, and you're kept by grace. If you were saved by works, you'd have to be kept by works. But you're saved by grace, and you are secured by the grace of God.

You know the first time that grace is found in the Bible, the word *grace*? Do you know where it is? It's found in the Book of Genesis. And it's spoken to Noah, in Genesis chapter 6 and verse 8. It's spoken about him. And the Bible says it this way: "*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD*" (Genesis 6:8). And how did God illustrate that grace to Noah? He said to Noah, "*Come thou and all thy house into the ark*" (Genesis

7:1). Now he didn't say, "Noah, go into the ark." Had he said, "Noah, go into the ark," that would have meant that God is out here. And Noah goes over there, when He says, "Come into the ark." That means, God's in the ark, and Noah comes in where God is. God was in that ark.

Peter tells us that ark was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Bible says, "*And the LORD shut him in*" (Genesis 7:16). Noah didn't shut the door. God shut the door. So here's Noah in the ark. He's finding grace in the eyes of the Lord. Then, the flood, the storm, comes, that tremendous judgment of God. Hey folks, that door kept the water out, but it also kept Noah in. You see, the Bible says, "*After that ye believed—we're what—ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*" (Ephesians 1:13). See, God shut him in.

Now folks, listen. There are folks who think that, somehow, you can get saved, and then get lost again. They say, "What if you fall?" Well, I imagine Noah, when the water got rough, he fell down many times in the ark. But he never fell out of the ark. Amen? Because God had shut him in. You see, the Bible says that we are kept—we're secure—in the Lord Jesus Christ. That grace is securing grace. Now folks, I thank God for this wonderful amazing grace—this sovereign grace—that comes from God. We never deserved it. It is saving grace. We're not saved by works. We're saved by grace. It is securing grace. The same grace that saves us is the grace that secures us.

#### **IV. Strengthening Grace**

But I want to say something else about this grace. Dear friend, this grace is strengthening grace. Now so many people accuse us—when we say that we're saved by grace, and not by good works—they accuse us of saying, "You folks just believe you can get saved and live anyway you like." Oh no. Listen to the Scripture here. The Bible says, "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men*" (Titus 2:11). That's verse 11. But now, watch verse 12: "*Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*" (Titus 2:12).

Amazing grace is strengthening, that's the next thing I want you to learn. It is strengthening grace. It gives you the power. It's the only power I know of to live righteously, godly, and soberly in this present world—in this vile, wicked world.

Now I want you to listen to me very carefully right now. Don't miss this. Grace means that God loves you just like you are. But he loves you too much to let you stay that way. Okay? Now that's grace. Grace means that, while we were yet sinners, Christ loved us. But oh the grace appears, "*teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.*" There's nothing that transforms you like the grace of God.

Some get the idea that, if you teach salvation by works, then everybody will be good, because God will be like Santa Claus, “making a list and checking it twice, and going to find out who’s naughty or nice.” And if you were naughty, then you go to hell. If you were nice, you go to Heaven. So we’ll be nice, so we can go to Heaven. Oh no, dear friend. That is not giving you strength. Grace is what gives you strength.

Suppose, when you were a little child, growing up, you never knew from one day to the next whether you were a member of the family. Today, I obeyed Mommy and Daddy. Today I’m in the family. The next day, I disobeyed. They have disowned me, and I’m no longer a family man. Part of the time, I am in the family. Part of the time, I’m not in the family. Today, they love me. The next day, I’m not their child. Do you see how that would drive a little child to distraction, frustration, neurosis? Do you see there’s no security there? A child that is a healthy growing child, there is.

## V. Sufficient Grace

Are you ready for this? It is sufficient grace. Look at the Scripture again, now. For he says, in verse 12, *“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”* (Titus 2:12). There is nothing in the world around you, dear friend, that God’s grace is not sufficient for. You see, Jesus said, *“In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33). And He is pouring his grace through you.

The Apostle Paul, in this present world, knew tribulation. God had given the Apostle Paul a great tremendous vision. God had just pulled back the curtains of glory, and let Paul look in on the other side. He had a great revelation of the third Heaven. But then, the Bible says something significant, in 2 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 7, and following. Here’s what Paul said. Listen to it. Paul said, *“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh”* (2 Corinthians 12:7). Now we don’t know what that was. But the word for *thorn* here is not the word like a rose thorn. It’s a word for a stake, a dagger. It was something excruciating that pierced him through. And then, he says it was *“the messenger of Satan to buffet me...”*—God did not cause it. Satan caused it. But God allowed it—*“the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure”* (2 Corinthians 12:7). And then, he says, *“For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me”* (2 Corinthians 12:8). “O God,” he says, “remove this stake, this dagger, out of my heart.” But here’s what God said to him: *“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness”* (2 Corinthians 12:9). And then, Paul said, *“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”* (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Friend, I don’t know what kind of trouble you have, right now. But the Spanish have

a Proverb: *“There’s no home without its hush.”* We all know sorrow; we all know heartache, because we live in this present world. But I want to tell you something, friend: His grace is sufficient for you. You say, “Not for me. I don’t know that His grace will be sufficient for me. My problem is too big.” Do you know what you remind me of? You remind me of a minnow swimming around in the Atlantic Ocean, worrying that it’s going to evaporate. Friend, God’s grace—God’s grace—is sufficient grace. It’s wrapped up in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now if you if you *“fail of the grace of God,”* if you don’t appropriate the grace of God, when trouble comes, then you’re going to become bitter. Listen to this verse, in Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 15—the Bible says, *“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God;”*—that is, “if you don’t receive the grace of God.” And then, he says—*“lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled”* (Hebrews 12:15). Trouble’s going to come into your life, and God is going to give grace. If you *“fail of the grace of God,”* if you say, “Hold it, I can handle it myself,” you know what’s going to happen? You’re going to become bitter, you’re going to become critical, you’re going to become hard, and you’re going to argue with God. But if you say, “God, I don’t understand it. But Your grace is sufficient for me,” then, God is going to begin to work that miracle in your heart and in your life.

Job said, *“The LORD gave,”*—anybody can say that. Job said, *“and the LORD hath taken away;”*—anybody can say that. But then, he said, *“blessed be the name of the LORD”* (Job 1:21). It takes grace to say that, folks. And it is God’s grace that is sufficient grace. I’ve watched people when they have problems. Some people will have the same kind of a problem. One man, over here, has a problem. Another man, over here, has a problem, the same kind of problem. One man grows more like the Lord Jesus; the other becomes bitter, because he “fails of the grace of God,” and many are defiled. What is the difference? The same sun that melts the ice hardens the clay.

Now you may not be able to understand what God is up to. But friend, *when you cannot trace God’s hand, you can trust God’s heart.* God is too good to be cruel, and too wise to make mistakes. You put it down big, plain, and straight, that it is in this present world we have grace. Some of you have been hurt. Some of you have been hurt by your father. Maybe, when you were a child, you were abused by your father, or maybe by an older brother. Some of you have memories, perhaps by a husband, or a wife, things that are in your heart and in your life that, perhaps, you don’t want anybody else to know of. How are you going to deal with that? My dear friend, receive the grace of God. And then, give it to them, also. Just give them the grace of God. The grace that you’ve received is the grace that you need to pass on to others. And then, let it go, and bury it in the grave of God’s grace. And go on, and live your life. That’s the only way that you’ll be free.

And I want to tell you that God's grace, and only God's grace, is sufficient. God said to Paul, *"My grace is sufficient for thee"* (2 Corinthians 12:9). Amazing grace is saving grace. Amazing grace is securing grace. Amazing grace is strengthening grace. Amazing grace is sufficient grace.

## VI. Surviving Grace

And I'll say this about God's amazing grace: Amazing grace is surviving grace. Look at the next verse. It says we're *"looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"* (Titus 2:13).

One of these days, it's all going to be over, folks. One of these days, perhaps today, Jesus is going to come. Or, perhaps, you're going to go, or you're going to die. In a few short years, for all of us will go. In 50 years, most of us won't be here. What's going to count, then? I mean, what really is going to matter, then? Is it going to be the money you've earned? Is it going to be the books you've written? Is it going to be the friends that you've had? What's going to matter? Is it going to be your front lawn and your flowers? What's going to matter? Is it going to be songs you've sung, the sermons you've preached? I'm going to tell you, friend, when the golden glow of the sunset of your life begins to mingle with the purpling dawn of eternity, when they stand around your casket, and they hold hands, and they speak with muted tones, the only thing that's going to matter to you is the grace of God. It is surviving grace.

Ephesians 2 and verse 7 says, *"That"*—our Lord—*"in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace"* (Ephesians 2:7). Do you know what God glories in, in eternity? Grace, in the ages to come. That's the reason amazing grace says,

*When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise,  
Than when we first begun.*

—JOHN NEWTON

## Conclusion

His grace—God's grace—it is amazing grace. It's the story of the Bible. It is sovereign grace. God loves you. He loves you, right now. Do you want that grace? Listen to me, folks. The Bible says in James chapter 4 and verse 6, *"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble"* (James 4:6). Do you know the person who doesn't receive is the man who doesn't think he needs it? He's a self-made man, and he worships his maker.

You receive the grace of God by humbling yourself. God resists the proud. God puts

Himself over against the proud. But He gives grace to the humble. The secret of living and dying is to say, "O God, I can't; and I just cast myself upon Your grace. I humble myself before You. I receive Your amazing grace."

And once you've received it, you need to start showing it. People all around you need grace. You know what would be so wonderful? You know what I want Bellevue church to be known as? A gracious church, where we accept people, and show the grace of God to people. A gracious church is gracious to your children. Be gracious to your husband. Be gracious to your next-door neighbor. When you receive grace, let's pass it on.

Oh, in the name of Jesus, seal the message to our hearts. We thank you, God, for Your amazing grace. Lord, we pray that many, today, will be saved. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

# Zeal: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** December 14, 1997

**Main Scripture Text:** Titus 2:11–14; 3:8–9

*“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”*

TITUS 2:13–14

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## Introduction

Take your Bibles please, and turn to Titus, the second chapter. We’re going to be talking, today, about zeal. Now, to be *zealous* means to be “boiling,” means to be “on fire.” It means to be “enthusiastic”; it means to be “full of passion.” And, I believe that’s what most church members need. Somebody coined this phrase: “The chime struck twelve, and the church gave up her dead.” We sometimes come to Sunday morning with a nonchalance, almost an indifference. But, when the Lord was speaking in Isaiah chapter 9—I know you’re in Titus chapter 2—but in Isaiah chapter 9, He spoke of that first Christmas, “*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder,*” and the rest of that wonderful passage (Isaiah 9:6). And then, the Bible says, “*The zeal of the LORD of hosts would perform this*” (Isaiah 9:7). I

want us to think a little bit about some zeal today. We're talking about zeal. Here's the title: "Zeal: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly." And, I want you to keep this in mind today, because we need to learn something about godly zeal. Charles Haddon Spurgeon was a great preacher of yesteryear. He said, "You might as well have a chariot without its steeds, a sun without its beams, a heaven without its joy, as to have a man of God without zeal." Well, we're going to think about that.

Turn to Titus 2 and begin to read with me, as we look into the Word of God. Verse 11: *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us"*—and, here's why He did it—*"that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people"*—now, here's our word—*"zealous of good works"* (Titus 2:11–14). I submit to you that what Bellevue Baptist Church needs, what every church in America needs, and what every individual Christian must have, if we're to have those things, is a burning, blazing, passionate, emotional love for the Lord Jesus Christ that overflows in service and worship to Him. But, having said that, there is a form of zeal that is ugly. It is ungodly; it is misguided. It leads to extremism; it makes fanatics. That's the reason I have entitled the message "Zeal: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly."

So, this morning, as we study, we're going to be thinking about zeal from three points: Zeal—number one—as it displays the grace of God; number two: zeal as it may distort the grace of God; and, number three: zeal as it may deny the grace of God.

## **I. Zeal Can Display the Grace of God**

Now, let's just see how zeal will display the grace of God. Look again in verse 11. He says, *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"* (Titus 2:11–14). Friend, if you believe what I just read from the Word of God, you cannot be nonchalant about it. No wonder G. Campbell Morgan said, "Lukewarmness is the worst form of blasphemy." You know, the Lord would rather have you out-and-out against Him than to say, "I believe these things, but they really don't excite me."

Now, you and I have to be zealous about truth. If you would look at the passage that I just read to you, you would find some glorious truths. For example, in verse 11, He speaks of grace: *"the grace of God that bringeth salvation,"* and isn't grace a blessing? (Titus 2:11). Grace came down at Christmas. We are saved by grace. And then, He

speaks, in verse 12, about holiness. You can't be lukewarm about holiness. He says that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live righteously, and soberly, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12). Do you have a burning passion to be holy? Or, are you like the little girl who prayed, "Lord, make me good—not too good, but good enough so I won't get a spanking." Now, is that the way we are? I mean, we say, "Now, we don't want to be overly righteous." Friend, I want to tell you, this morning: There ought to be in your heart a burning desire to be spotlessly clean and pure before God—no un-confessed sin. You ought to have a zeal to be holy, zealous of good works. He mentions, in verse 13, the Second Coming of Jesus: "*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*" (Titus 2:13). Your heart ought to be passionate; you ought to be saying, and praying, living, longing, saying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come."

He mentions the deity of Christ: "*Looking for that...glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*" (Titus 2:13). Who is our Savior? He is the great God. Jesus Christ is the great God. You don't just tip your hat to Jesus; you bow the knee to Jesus. He's got to be all in all. We ought to be zealous about that. These are wonderful truths. He talks about redemption in verse 14: "*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us*" (Titus 2:14). We've been washed in the blood of Jesus. You ought to be on fire for that. Your tears ought to flow down and say, "Thank You, Lord, for that." These are wonderful, glorious truths; and, we ought to be passionate about the truth, about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And, I'm going to tell you something, folks: Today, we're all supposed to put our arms around everybody else and say, "You know, your religion is just as good as mine." And, we're all un-American if we stand for anything. The great problem in America today, however, is where we've tried to homogenize everything; and, there's no distinctives. But, there is a faith, a truth, that we're to earnestly contend for. And, never, never, never, never diminish the truth. Be zealous for the truth; stand for the truth. The great problem in America today is truth decay, and everything is just kind of unraveling before us. And, if anybody stands for truth, he looks, today, like he's bigoted. We're all supposed to get along. But, I'm going to tell you *it's better to be divided by truth than united in error*. The Lord Jesus said, in Matthew chapter 10, verse 34: "*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword*" (Matthew 10:34). There are just some things you can't be moderate about. If you passed a house, and the house is on fire, would you moderately knock on the door to awake the people? If your wife is being attacked by some man who wants to assault her, would you moderately defend her? You can't be moderate about your love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Are you moderate about your love for Jesus? God have mercy upon you. Jesus said

to that church in Laodicea, which typifies the church of the last days, in Revelation chapter 3 and verse 16: “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:16). What He literally means is, “You make Me vomit.” That’s exactly what He means. “You’re not hot; you’re not cold. You’re ‘good Lord,’ ‘good devil,’ blow hot, blow cold, in the middle.” He says, “I would that you were either hot or cold, so that, because thou art neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, I will spew thee out of my mouth. You make me nauseous.” (Revelation 3:16). Does your religion make the Lord nauseous this morning? He had rather have you out-and-out against Him, absolutely cold, than to have you pretending to be on His side and not zealous about it. He said, “I would that you were either hot or cold, just don’t be lukewarm” (Revelation 3:16). You say, “That doesn’t make sense to me. At least it would be better to be lukewarm about it than to be cold.” No. The cause of Christ has been hurt more by lukewarm Christians, Sunday morning benchwarmers, who claim to be on the Lord’s side, but don’t love Him—don’t live for Him. If we only had ten percent of the Christians, of people who call themselves *Christians*, in America today, and all ten percent were on fire for the Lord Jesus Christ, we’d change this nation. The problem is we can’t reach the goal for stumbling over our own players. Jesus said, “I would that ye were either hot or cold. But, now that you’re lukewarm, I’m going to spew you out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:16). And then, He says, in Revelation chapter 3, verse 19: “*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore*”—*be zealous therefore—“and repent”* (Revelation 3:19). And so, there is the zeal that displays the grace of God. “*The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,*” and because of that, we’re to be zealous of good works (Titus 2:11). Yes, we’re saved by grace, but that doesn’t mean we’re to be nonchalant about it.

## **II. Zeal May Distort the Grace of God**

Now, here’s the second thing I want you to see: There is a zeal, there is a zeal—and, I’ve talked to you about it—that displays the grace of God, but there is also a zeal that distorts the grace of God. Now, I want to show you, in this same second chapter, some other Scripture.

Now, look, if you will, in...well, let’s go on over to chapter 3, and let’s begin looking in verse 8. Paul is still talking to Timothy about grace and zeal, and he says, “*This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works*”—that’s the same thing as “being zealous of good works”—“*These things are good and profitable unto men*”—that is, “There are good works that display the grace of God.” But now, in verse 9—look at it—it begins with a conjunction, but it begins with the word *but*—“*But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are*

*unprofitable and vain*” (Titus 3:8–9). Paul had some zealots on his hands, and these people—they had zeal also, but it wasn’t zeal. It wasn’t zeal that displayed the grace of God; it was zeal that distorted the grace of God.

#### A. **You Can Be Divisive**

There is a kind of zeal that is divisive and destructive, and it can be deadly; and, it can divide churches, and homes, and communities.

You know, there are some things that are good, but you can overdo them. I love a good steak—eat one about once every three months. But, you know, you want the steak cooked, but you don’t want it burned, right? You see, cooking a steak is good; burning a steak is a crime. A loudspeaker is good, but I was over in Madrid a while back, walking down the street, and they were getting ready for a street concert; and, they had set up a loudspeaker that looked like a ten-story building. And, a teenager must’ve been behind that thing, running the decibels. Friend, it’d pin your ears back. And, the music may have been fine, but it was turned up so loud that it was distorted. And, a good thing there becomes a bad thing. Principles are good. You can use a principle as a tool; you can use a principle as a weapon. Principles are like tools, like a hammer. You can take a hammer and build a house with it, or you can beat somebody to death with it. And, there are people who take good things and take good things to such an extreme that they make that good thing a bad thing. And, I have been around long enough to know that extremism is a real problem in the Body of Christ. Notice what Paul says about this: He says, in verse 9: *“avoid foolish questions”* (Titus 3:9). There is a foolish zeal.

#### B. **You Can Get Caught Up in Trivial Matters**

The former pastor of this church—one of the former pastors—Dr. Robert G. Lee, told the story I’ll never forget. He said they were at Bellevue Baptist; he was giving the invitation. He was preaching. Heaven came down. It was glorious; souls were being saved. And, he said, “People were coming down the aisle.” He was pleading for souls, and they were praying for souls. And, a lady came forward. He was down there to receive her, took her by the hand expecting her to say, “I want to receive Christ as my personal Savior and Lord.” She said, “Dr. Lee,” she said, “I have something to tell you.” You had to know Dr. Lee. He took no prisoners in some areas. And, he said, “Well, what is it, madam?” She said, “Did you know that there were people on Earth before Adam?” Now, this is during the invitation. This is when souls are being saved. This is when they’re pleading and praying. She said, “Did you know there were people on Earth before Adam?” Dr. Lee said, “No, I don’t know it. You don’t know it. Nobody knows it. Go to your seat.” Those kind of foolish questions.

I’m amazed at what some people get exercised about. There are some people who

can split a theological hair into sixteen different sections, and they don't have any burden for lost souls. And, Paul says, "*Avoid foolish questions*" (Titus 3:9). Don't get drawn into endless debates. It is foolish. It is also fractious—that is, it causes division. Look, if you will again, in verse 9 of this same chapter here: He says here "*contentions, and strivings*" (Titus 3:9). They generate contentions and strivings. When you become a zealot, when you become an extremist, you become a taskmaster—criticizing, judging, summing other people up, and causing problems in the Church over incidentals, things that really don't matter.

Let me tell you what happened in a particular church. In this church, for years, they'd had an American flag on the platform. One day, in a business meeting, a man stood up and made a motion that they take the American flag from the platform of the church. And, the people said, "Well, why should we take the flag down from the platform of the church?" He said, "Because, when you, in a church building, have an American flag on the platform, it seems to say to people that Christianity is an American religion; it is a national religion, rather than a worldwide religion and faith." And so, he made a passionate appeal to take the flag down. Well, people thought, "Well, wait a minute. Some people may think that, but what would it say if we took the flag down? Would it say that we don't appreciate and love our country, and so forth? We don't want to take the flag down." Well, somebody else stood up and said, "Well, I'll tell you what let's do: Let's put an American flag on one side and the Christian flag on the other side." And, everybody breathed a sigh of relief, but somebody said, "Oh, no, no, no, you can't do that. That means we think that the American flag and the Christian flag are equal." Well, somebody said, "I know what we can do!" I mean, they were debating this for hours, one business meeting after another. Somebody says, "Well, we'll put the Christian flag a little higher than the American flag." "Whew! Boy, we solved that." "No, no, no," somebody said. "Proper decorum says that there's no flag that is to be flown higher than the American flag in public display. That's wrong; that's against the rules to do that." Somebody else said, "Oh, I've got an idea: Let's put them both on the same level, where they seem on the same level, but let's put a piece of paper under the Christian flag." And, it went back and forth. People, Brother Bob, left the church over it. Foolish things! Debating over these kinds of things—it causes division over incidentals.

Sometimes church music—I love the music here, at Bellevue Baptist Church. I think Jim Whitmire does an incredible job, don't you? I just love the music. And, you know, one thing about Jim: He lets us hear a little bit of all of it. But, you know, people have different tastes in music. Did you know that? Have you discovered that? There are some people who love Southern Gospel. We had a Southern Gospel quartet here, one time. I saw people I'd never seen before and haven't seen since, on Sunday night, and they just packed out the building. They just love Southern Gospel, and there are some

people who can't stand Southern Gospel. And, there are some people who love anthems. I mean, you know, "The cow got in the corn, the corn, the corn, the cow, the cow, the corn," and they love that. And, they just want to hear these great glorious anthems, and many of them are wonderful. Some like Gaither music and other kinds of music, but we have different taste in music. After we had the Southern Gospel quartet here, I preached a sermon, one time, but I got up. It was on Wednesday night. I asked the people—I said, "I want to ask you a question: How many of you like liver and onions?" Did you know that one-third of the congregation liked liver and onions? I said, "How many of you cannot stand liver and onions?" One-third of our congregation could not stand liver and onions. I said, "How many of you like liver and onions, but only ever so often?" Another third lifted their hand. I said, "Folks, we are hopelessly divided as a congregation." What is that? That is taste—that's all that is. How would you like to be the minister of music and try to satisfy everybody's taste? It can't be done. There are people, I'll tell you, there are people in the world today who think if you sing contemporary Christian music, you've gone to the devil. They think if it has any kind of a beat to it or any kind of rhythm... Now, I know there is a kind of music that I cannot stand. I think it's got a jungle beat. I'm not talking about that. I am saying, folks, that there needs to be a time when we understand what the Apostle Paul said, when he said, "*Let your moderation be known unto all men*" (Philippians 4:5).

Same thing in worship—did you know that there are some people who think if you get in a worship service and people applaud, *Oh, no! That ought to be in the theater, not in the church. Don't applaud.* And, if you ever lift your hands, good night! What has happened? "I saw somebody lift his or her hands in church." And then, there are other people who think you've got to applaud for everything that moves. It's fun being a pastor. I've been thinking maybe the usher could meet people at the door and say, "Clapping or no clapping?" And, let them sit wherever they want to sit. The Bible says, "*Clap your hands, all ye people*" (Psalm 47:1). The Bible says, "Lifting up holy hands to the Lord in prayer" (1 Timothy 2:8). Hey, hey folks, a lot of this is just simply taste. And, if a person wants to clap his hands in joy, fine. If a person wants to lift his or her hands in praise, fine. If they don't want to do it, fine. But, there are people, sometimes, who get so extreme about these things that they are grace busters; they are joy killers. Just let the Lord be God in our hearts and in our lives. *We don't have to freeze in formalism or fry in fanaticism.*

### C. **You Can Go to Extremes**

We need to give people the... But, Paul says, "Look," he says, "It is foolish; it is fractious; and," he says, "it is fruitless." Notice what he says. We're in chapter 3—Titus chapter 3, verse 9: "*But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and*

*strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain*” (Titus 3:9). It’s fruitless! There are certain things, folks, that are good; but, if you become an extremist, they’ll be bad.

### **1. Legalistic About Your Quiet Time**

Did you know even your quiet time—you can get extreme about that? I believe you ought to have a quiet time. I believe you ought to start the day looking to the Lord, but do you know you can get so legalistic about a quiet time that it takes the joy out of it, and it becomes a burden rather than a blessing? Did you know there are times when you ought to be sleeping rather than praying? Did you know that? Jesus said to His disciples, *“Come ye...apart...and rest a while”* (Mark 6:31). Bible study—let’s go back to this thing: quiet time. You know, when I was a younger preacher—notice I said “younger,” a lot of the younger preachers—the phone sometime would ring at two in the morning, and you know how I’d answer the phone? “Hello!” I wanted them to think I’d been up all night studying the Book of Lamentations. Why, I would feel guilty if the phone would ring at two in the morning, and I wasn’t up! Boy, now, I think of that verse that says, *“It’s counted as a curse if you shout a greeting early in the morning”* (Proverbs 27:14). I believe you ought to have a quiet time—I really do. But, you can take things and distort them.

### **2. Legalistic About Your Bible Study**

Bible study—you ought to read the Bible, but you ought not to be reading the Bible if you ought to be with your grandkids. Or, you ought not to be reading the Bible if you ought to be reading something else. You say, “Pastor, you sound like a heretic.” No, I’m not. I believe in Bible reading, but there are people who take a principle and turn it into a hammer. It’s extremism, and we have to watch that.

### **3. Legalistic About Not Having Unsaved Friends**

Separation—we ought to be separated from sinners, from sin, from iniquity. The Bible says, *“When we name the name of the Lord, depart from iniquity”* (2 Timothy 2:19). We are to maintain good works. He’s already said that: to live righteously and soberly (Titus 2:12). But, that doesn’t mean that we cannot have some unsaved friends that we’re trying to bring to Jesus. When we have something like “The Singing Tree,” we say, *“Bring your friends that are lost!”* “I don’t have any. I live a separated life.” You know, you’re a little more separated than Jesus was. Matthew chapter 9—Matthew chapter 9, verses 9 through 13: *“And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew”—now, Matthew was a tax collector—“sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him. And it cam to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?”*—it’d be like Jesus, if He

lived in Memphis, would go out and eat a pizza with pimps and dope pushers. Now, what if you saw Jesus sitting down in some place, in one of the streets of our city, eating and sharing a pizza with pimps and dope pushers? That gets it down to where it was. This guy, this guy Matthew, was a traitor, a thief, and Jesus said, “You come and follow Me”—*“But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”* (Matthew 9:9–13). Jesus was the holiest man who ever lived, but Jesus was a friend of sinners. And, the sinner standing in the pulpit is glad that He is, glad that He is.

#### **4. Legalistic About Serving**

I’m saying, folks, there is a zeal that is ugly in service to the Lord, but you can get so zealous in serving the Lord that you run ahead of God. It’s just as bad to run ahead of Him as it is to run behind Him. Somebody asked about a particular man, “Do you think he’s going to get to Heaven?” The answer was, “Yes, if he doesn’t run right past it.” There’s enough time in every day to do gracefully everything God wants you to do. Jesus said, “Come apart. Come ye apart and rest a while” (Mark 6:31).

#### **5. Legalistic About Self-Denial**

In the matter of self-denial—we ought to deny self, but denying self isn’t necessarily denying self things. Some people think that, in order to deny self, you have to be somber. Jesus wasn’t somber; Jesus was a man of joy. Jesus went to parties. Little children sat on His lap. Jesus was not some pale, sanctimonious, religious recluse. Jesus understood what the Book of Ecclesiastes says, in Ecclesiastes 5, verse 18: *“Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him”* (Ecclesiastes 5:18).

Friend, there’s an extremism that is foolish, that is fruitless, that is fractious. There is an extremism that is fatal. Did you know that misguided zeal has caused the spiritual death of many people? How many people are lost because of that? Now, you might want to turn to it, but it’s an interesting passage over in Luke chapter 9. I’m talking, here, about misguided zeal. Jesus is dealing with the Samaritans. Now, you know, the Samaritans and the Jews had quite a thing going. You talk about racism. It was industrial strength racism. Luke chapter 9, verse 54. When the Samaritans acted wrongly to Jesus is where we’re going to pick up: *“And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias”—or Elijah—“did?”—“hey, Lord, let’s nuke ’em. A little heavenly napalm. Let’s get ’em, Lord.”* Well, you talk about zeal: “Lord, we’re going to bring down fire on these people.” But, notice—*“But he turned, and*

*rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them"* (Luke 9:54–56).

And, they went to another village. Later on, later on, another fire fell on the Samaritans; it was the fire of revival, Pentecostal fire, and they came to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Heavenly fire. Simon Peter, I would say, was a man with misguided zeal. You remember that part in the Passion Play where Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane, and Judas comes in there with this entourage of people to betray Jesus? Simon Peter's been asleep. Simon Peter wakes up. He sees the man there, leading the group of soldiers. His name is Malchus; he is the servant of the High Priest. Simon Peter takes out his sword and takes a swing at that guy. You talk about zeal! Boy, that's zeal—when you draw a sword for the Lord Jesus Christ. Simon wasn't ready to live for Jesus; he was ready to kill for Jesus. Now, Simon was a fisherman; he wasn't a swordsman. He cut off the fellow's ear; he meant to cut off his head. And, Jesus said, "Simon, put up your sword," and Jesus healed that man's ear (John 18:11). Now, what was wrong with Simon? Simon was a zealot. Number one: Simon had the wrong enemy. We're not wrestling against flesh and blood. That servant was not the enemy; he was a victim of Satan. He needed the love of God. We have the wrong enemy; we have the wrong weapon. He takes a sword, but the Bible says, "*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds*" (2 Corinthians 10:4). Later, Simon Peter took the sword of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and struck three thousand alive. That's the difference: the wrong enemy, the wrong sword. He had the wrong energy. He'd been asleep. Jesus had said, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Mark 14:38). Now, he wakes up having not prayed, and he goes forth—not in the energy of the Spirit, but in the energy of the flesh. And, "*the flesh profiteth nothing*" (John 6:63). He had the wrong attitude; he was hopping mad and scared. And, the Bible says, "*The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*" (James 1:20).

What am I saying? I am saying that there ought to be a burning, blazing, passionate, emotional love for the Lord Jesus Christ—a zeal that displays grace. But, God keep us from zeal that distorts grace, that makes us fanatics. You know what a fanatic is? Somebody who's lost his direction and doubles his speed, and the churches today are full of these people. It's the grace of God that we need. Notice what Titus is saying here, in Titus chapter 2 and verse 10. Look at it. He says, "*Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*" (Titus 2:10). Do you know what that means? Beautify truth. Beautify truth. Adorn the doctrine of God. Put the garments of praise and beauty on the doctrine of God. Look in chapter 3: "*Put them in mind to be subject*"—talking to the Christians—"*to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready for every good work, To speak evil of no man,*

*to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men*—and then, here’s the reason—*“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another”* (Titus 3:1–3). What He is saying is, “You were just like that before you got saved! Don’t look down your long nose at some sinner! He’s a sinner! What are they supposed to do but sin? I mean, that’s what he is. What do you expect?” You put on the beauty, the grace, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and let your life display the grace of God. Don’t let your life distort the grace of God.

### **III. Zeal May Deny the Grace of God**

Now, there’s the zeal that displays the grace of God; there’s the zeal that distorts the grace of God; and then, there’s the zeal that denies the grace of God. I’ll take just a moment to tell you about that, but verse 11—chapter 2, verse 11 says: *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men”* (Titus 2:11). It’s grace that brings salvation. You’re not saved any other way. You’re not saved by your zeal; you’re not saved by your good works. That’s the reason I love that song

*Rock of ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee;*

And, it says...there’s a line in there

*Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone;  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.*

—AUGUSTUS M. TOPLADY

You know what Paul said to His compatriots of His day, the Jews of His day? He said, *“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God”* (Romans 10:2–3). There is a zeal that denies grace. There are some of you who say, “You know, I’m so good. I’m so fine. I don’t need to be saved.” Friend, *there’s nobody on Earth so bad he cannot be saved and nobody so good he need not be saved*. There is the zeal that denies grace. You need the grace of God. Thank God for God’s marvelous, wonderful grace. Grace came down at Christmas.

### **Conclusion**

*A man dreamed that he went to Heaven. People came and were knocking on the door to Heaven, trying to get in. A voice within says, “Who is it that seeks entrance into Heaven, and what is the password?” And, the man on the outside said, “Zeal, good*

works!" The voice from within said, "Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. I never knew you." Another man knocked on the door, and He said, "What is it that is the password into Heaven?" He said, "Morality, self-righteousness." The voice within said, "Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Another came and knocked on the door to Heaven. "What is the password? Who is it that seeks entrance into Heaven, and what is the password?" This man said, "I'm just a poor, faltering Christian." "What is the password into Heaven?" He said, "In my hand no price I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." And, the voice within said, "Open wide the gate and let him in, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven." *"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11).*

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father God, I pray that there will be those today who'll understand that salvation is a sheer gift, purchased with the precious blood of Jesus, to be received in repentance and faith. Open hearts, I pray. Now, while heads are bowed and eyes are closed, if you're not certain that you're saved, why don't you pray a prayer like this? "Lord Jesus, I need to get this settled. Help me today to get it settled. I want to know that I'm saved. Guide me and show me what to do. In Your name I pray."

# Don't Be a Disgrace to Grace

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: January 16, 1994**

**Main Scripture Text: Titus 2:11–15**

*“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,”*

TITUS 2:11

## Outline

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## Introduction

Find Titus chapter 2, if you would, please, beginning in verse 11. And this verse begins in a wonderful way, because it begins with these words: *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee”* (Titus 2:11–15). The title of the message is: “Don't be a Disgrace to Grace”—“Don't be a Disgrace to Grace.”

Now what is grace? Grace is God's love to us. Grace is God's love that causes God to give to us. Grace is God's love that causes God to give to us where there is no merit.

Grace is God's love that causes God to give to us when there is much demerit. Grace is God's love that causes God to give to us where there is no merit and much demerit, when we don't even want it. He must find us, and persuade us that we need it. And grace is God's love that gives at great, great cost to God Himself.

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me.*

—JOHN NEWTON

Anybody, any place, any time, no matter how wicked, how vile, can come to Him in repentance and faith, and will be saved gloriously, instantaneously, radically, dramatically, eternally—saved by the grace of God. Not one thing to earn, but there is much to learn.

Now listen. *“The grace of God”*—verse 11—*“hath appeared to all men, teaching us...”*—do you see it? Nothing to earn, but much to learn—*“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”* (Titus 2:11–12). So let's look at this passage of Scripture: *We should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world* (Titus 2:12).

## **I. What Is the Lifestyle that Is a Disgrace to Grace?**

What is the deed? What is the lifestyle that is a disgrace to grace? It is worldliness—worldliness. Verse 12: *“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts”* (Titus 2:12)—*“worldly lusts.”* The great problem in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Church is the problem of worldliness. Many of us love the message of grace, but we don't want to hear our pastor teach much about worldliness. However, look, in verse 15: *“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee”* (Titus 2:15). The devil does not want you to hear the message of the grace of God; and so, he would deny grace. But if he cannot deny grace, then he would try to distort grace and have you to believe that, since we are saved by grace and grace only, and since works don't help save us nor keep us saved, then it doesn't make any difference how we live. There's no more devilish lie out of the pit of Hell than that. And today, I want to say to you, you need to pray that God will keep your life from being a disgrace to grace.

Now often, we hear about a worldly Christian. A worldly Christian, really, is a contradiction in terms. Billy Sunday said, “You might as well speak of a heavenly devil as to speak of a worldly Christian.” Now I'm aware of the fact that, in this generation, we don't hear a lot of preaching about worldliness. As a matter of fact, the world has become so churchy, and the Church has become so worldly, that people don't really understand the principle of Biblical separation.

## A. **What Is the World?**

What do we mean by *worldliness*? What is *the world*? Well, when the Bible uses the term *world*, here, in Titus 2:12, it's not speaking of the planet Earth—nothing wrong with this terrestrial globe as it is. God made it. God created it. Jesus loved nature. He said, “*Consider the lilies how they grow*” (Luke 12:27). “*The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof*” (Psalm 24:1). The rocks, the trees, the hills, the rivers: all of this is the handiwork of God. Thank God for it. If you love nature, you love what Jesus loved. So when the Bible speaks of *the world*, it's not speaking of the planet Earth. And when the Bible speaks of *the world*, it's not speaking of the people who live on planet Earth. There's nothing wrong with loving people. If you don't love people, there's something wrong with you. The Bible says, concerning the world of people, that, “*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son*” (John 3:16). Now if God loved those people, you can love them. Say “amen.” You ought to love everybody.

What does the Bible mean, therefore, when it speaks of *the world* and *worldliness*? The word that is translated *world* is the Greek word *cosmos*. And it means “a system”; it means “an order of things”; and it means “a philosophy.” For example, we speak of the “world of sports”; or we speak of the “world of business”; or we speak of the “world of fashion.” Now put this verse in your margin: 1 John 2 and verse 15—1 John 2 and verse 15: “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*” (1 John 2:15). Now that's a very strong verse. You cannot love this world's system and love God Almighty at the same time.

Let me give you four words that begin with the letter *p*, just as a memory device to help you to understand what the world system is. And I'm going to give you a lot of scriptures. You may want to get out a piece of paper, and just jot these down for further references, because, very frankly, I have so much to say today, that if we search out and turn to every scripture, we will not be able to get finished. So I'm going to give them to you rather quickly.

### **1. The World Has a Prince**

But first of all, put down this: The world has a prince—a prince. Who is the prince of this world? Put this scripture down: John chapter 12, verses 31 and 32. Jesus is facing the cross, and this is what Jesus says: “*Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out*” (John 12:31)—the prince of this world. Now who is the prince of this world? He is Satan himself. And then, put this scripture down: John 14 and verse 30. Jesus said, “*Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me*” (John 14:30). That is, there's nothing that Satan could accuse Jesus of. There's no temptation that Satan could allure Jesus with. Jesus had no itch the devil could scratch. Jesus had no wrong the devil could accuse. “*The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me*” (John 14:30). And then, Jesus spoke of

the Holy Spirit, who would come and bring judgment. Put this scripture down: In John chapter 16, verse 11, He says, “[*The Holy Spirit will convict*] of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:11).

And in these few chapters, Jesus has spoken three times of the prince of this world. Who is the prince of this world? His name is Satan. Now John, who wrote the Gospel of John, also wrote the Epistle of John. And in 1 John chapter 5 and verse 19, he said to the believers, “*And we know that we are of God, and the whole world*”—the whole world—“*lieth in wickedness*” (1 John 6:19). And exegetes and scholars tell us that the words *lieth in wickedness* literally mean, “is cradled in the lap of wickedness.” And the word *wickedness* means, “the wicked one.” That is, it is Satan who has this world system in his arms, rocking it to sleep in the lap—in the bosom—of the wicked one.

Now understand this about the world system: that it is antithetical against grace. There is a system, and behind that system, there is a mastermind. Sometimes, people ask me, “Pastor Rogers, do you believe in the conspiratorial theory of history? Do you believe that there are some people back there, behind the scenes—the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderbergs, all of these things—the I. G. Farben, all of these things, you know?” I am always getting this material about a conspiratorial theory of history—that, somewhere back behind everything, there are a few masterminds that are just working everything out. Frankly, friend, I do not know, but I know this much: There is a mastermind, and his name is Satan. Jesus calls him *the prince of this world*. And he has many underlings who call him *master*. He has an intricate organization. There is a network of wickedness.

Listen to this about Satan—Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 12—Paul said: “*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood...*”—oh, we need to learn that—“*we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities...*”—now, you see, Satan is a prince. A principality is that organization that is under the leadership of a prince—“*against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this...*”—are you listening?—“*this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*” (Ephesians 6:12). There is a great conspiracy; the Bible calls it “*the mystery of iniquity*” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). Have you got it? So the first thing about the world is this: The world has a prince.

## **2. The World Has a Philosophy**

Now secondly, the world has a philosophy—that’s the second *p*. The world has a philosophy. There is an enticing network of ideas and values that are skillfully woven together to enslave the guilty and to entrap the innocent. Let me just give you, quickly, these verses: 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 12, speaks of “*the spirit of the world*” (1 Corinthians 2:12). There’s a worldly spirit. First Corinthians 3, verse 19, speaks of “*the wisdom of this world*” (1 Corinthians 3:19). The devil is very cunning. He is brilliantly stupid, hideously beautiful—“*the wisdom of this world.*” First Corinthians chapter 7 and

verse 31 speaks of *“the fashion of this world,”* which is passing away (1 Corinthians 7:31). Second Peter chapter 2, verse 20, speaks of *“the pollutions of the world”* (2 Peter 2:20).

There is a philosophy; it’s out there. It’s in the movies. It’s in television. It’s in the news. It’s in the world of religion. It goes from the schoolhouse to the statehouse, to Madison Avenue, from Wall Street. It may seem innocent. It may seem beautiful. It may seem harmless. But it is a system, a philosophy. The Bible speaks of *“the spirit of this world,”* *“the wisdom of this world,”* and *“the pollution of this world.”* Do you have it?

### **3. The World Has a Purpose**

Now not only is there a prince, and not only is there a philosophy, but the world has a purpose—a purpose. Now when we’re saved by grace, we’re to deny worldly lusts. What is the purpose of this world? There is a calculated plan, an unwavering purpose of this world system. The world is hostile to the things of God. Put these verses down, under the heading *“Purpose.”* Number one: John 7, verse 7—Jesus said, *“The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil”* (John 7:7)

Does the world hate Jesus? You’d better believe it. All the people of the world don’t hate Jesus. Nature doesn’t hate Jesus. But there’s a system that hates Jesus. Now they don’t hate the baby Jesus. Oh, the world system can dance giddily around the manger. They don’t hate the Jesus that heals. They don’t hate the Jesus that has ritual. They don’t hate that Jesus. They don’t hate the religious Jesus. Do you know what they hate? They hate the righteous Jesus. They hate the Jesus who says, *“Right is right, and wrong is wrong.”* If you want this world system to come down on you like a hammer, just say this: *“There is a fixed standard of right and wrong, because He says so.”* Then, you are in trouble.

Listen to what Jesus said. Why does the world hate Him? Listen—John 7, verse 7: *“The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil”* (John 7:7). Jesus just rips the veil of darkness away, and shows this system for what it is.

Put this scripture down: John 14, verse 17—Jesus speaks of *“the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him”* (John 14:17). When you argue with people of this world about what you believe, they can’t understand you. They’re not lying, when they say, *“I don’t see it.”* They don’t see it. The Bible speaks of *“the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you”* (John 14:17). That’s the Holy Spirit. That is antithetical to the spirit of this world. And then, Jesus gives you a warning, brother or sister in Christ. Listen, those of you who have been trying to play footsy with the world. Here’s a warning—John 15, verse 18: *“If*

*the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you”* (John 15:18). Are you better than Jesus? Do you want the world to love you, that hated Jesus? Then, James said—put this Scripture down—in James 4, verse 4—listen to it. James said, “*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God*” (James 4:4). If you’re a friend to this world’s system, with its prince, and its philosophy, and its purpose, you are shaking your fist in the face of God; you have declared war on God Himself. There is a purpose. Satan’s system is what? What is his purpose? It is calculated to draw away your heart and your mind from Jesus, and from the things of God, until Satan can enthrone his own king, the Antichrist, on the Earth.

#### **4. The World Has a People**

Now what’s the fourth *p*? First of all, there’s a prince; secondly, there’s a philosophy; thirdly, there is a purpose. The fourth *p*: the world has a people. Now there are people who are in this world system. For example, Luke chapter 16 and verse 8: “*The Lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely:*”—and then, listen to this—“*for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light*” (Luke 16:8). Now we’re not to hate people, as such, but we’re to hate the system that has enslaved these people; and, these people are in this system. The world has a people, the children of this world.

Now don’t be surprised when you have difficulty, as a child of God, because this world is not our home. We’re passing through. You are a twice-born person in a world of once-born people. And what you have, and where you are headed, and what you believe is completely opposite. Our faith starts at a different source. It follows a different course. It ends at a different conclusion. And you should not be surprised when you find yourself going against the tide. Remember this: We’re members of the human world. We live in the physical world, but we are not to be a part of the satanic system—the world system. We are to be separated.

So what is the first calling of grace? When you’re saved by grace. “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*” (Titus 2:11–12). We’re in the world, but we’re not of the world. Paul said, in another place, that our first duty—our first obligation, our first responsibility—having been saved by grace, is to separate from the world.

If you take the Book of Romans, and begin with the first 11 chapters of the Book of Romans, it is a great, great treatise on salvation by grace. But when you get into chapter 12, listen to what he says—verses 1 and 2: “*I beseech you therefore, brethren...*”—and, the *therefore* refers to all that has already been said about the grace of God—“*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your*

*bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*” Now listen to this: *“And be not conformed to this world...”*—that’s exactly what he’s saying in Titus 2, verses 11 and 12. Titus 2:11–12 is just a shortened version of the Book of Romans—*“be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”* (Romans 12:1–2).

The very word for the word *church* is *ekklesia*, which means, “a group of people called out.” The Church is called out. We’re to be different; we’re to be separate. A Christian ought to stand out in this world’s system like a diamond in a coal mine, like a gardenia in a garbage can. We are different.

Again, put this verse down: John 15, verse 19—Jesus said, *“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you”* (John 15:19). Quit trying to win popularity contests with the world. A dear, sweet lady said to me, the other day, “Oh, brother Rogers, you’re so wonderful. Everybody loves you.” I thought, “Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha. She ought to read my mailbag.” “Everybody loves you.” No, they don’t.

Now I don’t want to unnecessarily make enemies. But friend, I don’t want to betray Jesus. I don’t want to betray the Word of God. Jesus said, *“Don’t be surprised if the world hates you. ‘I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you’”* (John 15:19). And so we hear a lot, today, about the separation of Church and state. Do you know what the message the Church needs to hear is? The message on the separation of Church and world. I mean, we need to be separate. We need to be different. This is why the Apostle John warned us, in 1 John 2, verse 15—put this down: *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world...”*—now, here’s what the world is. Are you ready—*“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life...”*—that’s all that’s in the world. I mean, that’s it. That’s the sum total—*“the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever”* (1 John 2:15–17).

Now one illustration is worth thousands of words. I don’t know a better illustration than the life of a man named Lot, who was a saved man, who was saved by the grace of God. And yet, while he was saved by grace, he failed to learn that lesson that Titus taught, in Titus chapter 2, verses 11 and 12. Now this time, I want you to turn to the Scripture, and I want you to turn to 2 Peter chapter 1—2 Peter chapter 1, verse 1: *“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus*

our Lord” (2 Peter 1:1–2). Peace follows grace, and it all comes through faith. That’s what Peter is saying.

But then, Peter, like Paul, sees that there are some who would be a disgrace to grace, and he gives some examples. Now turn to chapter 2 of Peter—2 Peter chapter 2, verse 6—and I’m going to break into the middle of a sentence, because it is an extended passage. You shouldn’t really start a sentence with *and*, but I’m breaking in, in verse 6: “*And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample...*”—and, that’s the key. Sodom and Gomorrah, and the destruction thereof is an example. God left Sodom with its smoking ruins as an example to the people of this generation. If you can’t understand that, then you don’t understand black print on white paper. Now listen—“*condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot,*”—that is, Lot, a man who had been justified by faith, and the grace of God, who was—“*vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man...*”—underscore that. Lot, the man that we’re talking about, was a righteous man. In order for him to be just and righteous, he had to be saved by the grace of God that Peter had already told us about—“*(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished*” (2 Peter 2:6–9).

Now what have we said here? Peter is talking about grace; and then, he talks about a man who lived in a worldly system. His name was Lot. And he was saved by grace, and he was kept by grace. And yet, Lot is what we would call, today, a *worldly Christian*. He received the grace of God, but he did not deny worldly lusts. Lot is a classic example of a man who was a disgrace to grace.

Now I want us to turn, therefore, to the Book of Genesis; and, I want us to see, in Genesis, the biography of this man we call *Lot*. And Lot is the prime example of what I’m talking about, when I say that we should not be a disgrace to grace. Turn to Genesis chapter 13—Genesis chapter 13. And you need to turn to the Genesis materials, and keep your Bible open. Genesis chapter 13. Let me, before I even begin to read, tell you who Lot was. Lot was the nephew of Abraham. He was Abraham’s brother’s son. God called Abraham out of Mesopotamia, out of the Ur of the Chaldees, and God made Abraham to be the father—the progenitor—of the Jewish nation. And he’s the brightest star in the Hebrew heaven. And when he left his homeland to go to the land of Canaan, the land we now call *Israel* or *Palestine*, there was one who went along with him. His nephew went with him. And Abraham’s nephew was a man named Lot. Lot loved God, and Lot was saved, because the Bible tells us that he was just, that he was a righteous man.

So you have Abraham, who was a godly man, and Lot, who was a godly man—an uncle and a nephew. And they're there, in the land of Canaan, and both of them are very wealthy. And both of them have a lot of flocks and herds. And after a while, they realized there's not enough grazing land for both families, so there comes a dispute. And that's where we're going to pick up our reading—here, in Genesis chapter 13, and I begin in verse 5—look at it: *“And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.”* And that tells me that you can be rich and righteous at the same time. Abraham was a godly man, but he was a very wealthy man. And Lot was a very wealthy man. But now, look in verse 7: *“And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left”* (Genesis 13:5–9).

Do you see the magnanimous spirit of this man Abraham? Abraham said, “Lot, listen. Let's not argue. Let's not fight over material things. Just choose—just choose. There's the whole land, Lot. Just take whatever you want, but let's not argue in front of these heathen, in front of these pagans.”

And now notice verse 10. Here's where a good man began to go wrong, and I want you to listen—listen; because, if you don't listen, you will love when I preach the message of grace, but then, you will be a disgrace to grace, because you will not learn the lesson of grace: that *“denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”* (Titus 2:12).

Now here is Lot. He has the choice. And look, if you will, in verse 11: *“Then Lot chose him...”*—that's the key, right there: no prayer, no looking to God. For him, his salvation had become a self-service cafeteria line—*“Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.”* And then, look, in verse 12: *“Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom”* (Genesis 13:11–13).

Now why did he do this? Well, for one thing, he wanted all that Sodom had to offer. Sodom, in the Bible, stands for the world; it stands for all that God hates. It was unspeakably wicked, and yet, there was an attraction for Lot.

## **II. Four Principles Concerning the World**

Now I want to give you four principles concerning the world. And they're going to be found in this passage.

## A. Learn to Resist the Pull of the World

Principle number 1: You need to learn to resist the pull of the world. It pulls on me. I'm telling you, it pulls on me. You say, "Pastor, I thought you were so sanctified you didn't have any more temptation." Well, I'm not more sanctified than Jesus was, and Jesus was tempted in all points like as we. And the Bible says, "*Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall*" (1 Corinthians 10:12). And I'm going to tell you that this world so pervades us, and is so around us, and is so pervasive, that there is constantly a pull on you. You are bombarded with it—I mean, every moment. And principle number one is, you need to resist the pull of the world.

What was pulling on Lot, right now? The world with its money, the world with its business, the world with its pleasure, the world with its social life. Lot had no prayer. He wasn't seeking God. There wasn't a thought for the welfare of his children. Lot made a decision at this point, I believe, which was purely economic. By the way, no man has the right to make all the money he can. Often, we hear people say to young people, "Make all the money you can, just so long as you make it honestly." That's bad advice, because if you make all the money you can, you might find yourself making money the wrong way, at the wrong time, even though you may not be in an illegal business.

For example, I just want to pay my respects to gambling, right now. Anybody who is in favor of legalized gambling will never have my support as a politician—just won't have it. Gambling is not like any other business. In good business, there is always a win-win situation. You give a customer what he needs; he gives you what you need. And you both are blessed. Gambling is ultimately selfish. Gambling is always win-lose. You cannot win without someone else losing. And when the government is in the business of gambling, the government is in the business of producing losers. They always talk about the man who won the sweepstakes. Why don't they talk about the millions who lost?

Now here's a decision that Lot made. It was a decision that was based on economics. First Timothy chapter 6, verse 10: "*For the love of money is the root of all evil*" (1 Timothy 6:10). When are we going to learn? Matthew 6, verse 33: "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matthew 6:33). You say, "Well, Pastor, a man has got to live." No, he's got to die. And after he dies, he's got to face God. But there was Sodom, and Sodom was Satan's masterpiece. Remember the scripture 1 John 2, verse 16: "*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world*" (1 John 2:16). There was the lust of the flesh—Sodom with its pleasures. There was the lust of the eyes—Sodom with its possessions. There was the pride of life—Sodom with its philosophy.

Now Lot's sin is not a sin that only the rich have. You can be poor, and be covetous.

You can be in a meager salary, and be covetous. This old world flirted with Lot. He was enticed. He became a friend of the world, and committed adultery with God. Those same forces that worked on Lot are working on you and me, day by day. Resist the pull of the world.

## **B. Refuse the Persuasion of the World**

Number two—second philosophy: Refuse the persuasion of the world. Now remember Romans 12, verses 1 and 2. The Bible says we're not to be conformed to this world (Romans 12:2). How did Lot end up in such a horrible state? First of all, the devil began to work very subtly with this man. There was the persuasion of the world, as well as the pull of the world.

### **1. Lot Moved in the Wrong Direction**

First of all, Lot just simply moved in the wrong direction. Look, if you will, in verse 12—Genesis 13, verse 12: “[He] pitched his tent toward Sodom” (Genesis 13:12). That’s just a little compromise. He’s just moving in the wrong direction.

### **2. Lot Made a Wrong Decision**

And then, secondly, he just makes a wrong decision. He now becomes at home in Sodom. Look, if you will, in chapter 14 and verse 12—look at it: “*And they took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son, who dwelt in Sodom*” (Genesis 14:12). Now we just read that he pitched his tent toward Sodom. Well, how did he get into Sodom? Just an inch at a time. There are some of you, you just said, “Well, you know, I believe we ought to have HBO in our home. You know, we want to watch the sports—the boxing and so forth.” And whatever’s on that—I don’t know what’s on it—but I know it’s Hell’s Box Office. You just kind of pitch your tent toward Sodom. You wouldn’t watch that raunchy TV—oh no, not you. But you’re going to have that in your home. You’re going to give the devil a pipeline right into your home. And so you’re just moving a step at a time. First, he pitches his tent—there’s a wrong direction; then, a willful decision. He said, “Well, I’ll move in. I don’t have to partake of their sins.”

### **3. There Is a Woeful Deception**

And then, there is a woeful deception. Look, if you will, in chapter 19, now. I want you to see this evolution. I want you to see how the world persuaded him. Genesis 19, verse 1: “*And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom*” (Genesis 19:1). Now at first, he’s moving toward Sodom. Then, he’s dwelling in Sodom. Now he’s sitting in the gate of Sodom. You know what the gate of Sodom was? That was the courthouse. That’s where the decisions were made. He’s become an alderman. He’s become a city councilman. He’s become a commissioner or something there, in Sodom. He has moved into Sodom. He’s at home in Sodom. He’s working in Sodom. His conscience has become dull. He’s no longer shocked at sin. What used to amaze

him, now just amuses him. He's become a solid citizen of Sodom. He's on the city council. He's a VIP. His wife, I'm sure, was a leader in Sodom society. His girls—cheerleaders at Sodom High. They're dating the boys of Sodom. I mean, this is a righteous man. He's moved into Sodom.

And then, I want you to see something—Genesis chapter 19, verse 7: *“And he said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly”* (Genesis 19:7). Now he's calling the Sodomites his brothers. Do you understand? Do you see how the world persuaded him? Now he has sunk so low that you could never have told this righteous man he would get so low.

*Who is it knocks so loud? A lonely little sin slipped through.*

*I answered, and soon all Hell was in.*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Lot moved into Sodom, and Sodom moved into him. The world conformed him and corrupted him.

### **C. Realize the Pollution of Sodom**

Now the third thing—and, very quickly—I want you to realize the pollution of Sodom. Sodom was so wicked that God said, “I'm going to destroy it with fire and brimstone.” And in Genesis chapter 19, verses 1 through 11—we don't have time to read it; our time is gone—but God sent two angels to warn Lot that Sodom was going to be destroyed with fire and brimstone (Genesis 19:1–11). The Sodomites, a sexually perverted and wicked people, actually wanted to commit sodomy with those angels. The sex perverts of Sodom sought to sexually attack these holy angels. Lot has become so low and so vile.

Now remember, he was called a *just man* and a *righteous man saved by grace*, but he has become so low and so vile that he offered his two virgin daughters to the wicked men of Sodom in order to sate their lusts and to avert himself from the judgment of these angels. Why, the men of Sodom were around the house of Lot. Lot's out there, trying to reason with them. The angels reach out and snatch Lot inside. The Sodomites are stricken with blindness. And when Lot finally speaks to his sons-in-laws to try to get them to flee the city of Sodom, they simply mock him.

Look, if you will, in Genesis chapter 19, verse 12: *“And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law”* (Genesis 19:12–14). They

laughed at the old man.

You listen to what this preacher is telling you today. Some of you are going to hear the message, “Saved by Grace,” and you’re going to say, “Hallelujah,” believe on Jesus, and be saved. “Nothing I do, it doesn’t matter. My works don’t matter. I’m just saved by grace. Therefore, I am going to be in this world, and of this world. And I’m going to Heaven.” “Pastor, if I get saved by grace, and sin, will I lose my salvation?” No, but friend, you will lose much.

One of the things you may lose is your family, and your children. These sons-in-law looked at Lot, and they said, “Will you listen who’s talking? That’s the old man. Hey, hey Lot, you’ve gone religious on us now. We’ve seen you drinking there, in the tavern. We’ve seen you gambling. We’ve seen you playing around. We’ve seen you there, calling the Sodomites your brothers; and now, you’re telling us... you’re telling us?” And they died, and went to Hell. And some of you are going to Heaven, and your loved ones are going to go to Hell, because of the rotten, ungodly life that you’ve lived as a child of God. And you’ll be singing “Amazing Grace” all the way, and your children are going to die, and go to a devil’s Hell.

*“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”* (Titus 2:11–12). I don’t have time to tell you the rest of it. I wish I did, but I just say this:

#### **D. Remember the Price**

Remember the price—that’s the fourth principle. Just remember the price. When judgment fell on Sodom, there was a shower of red rain. Fire poured from Heaven. If you were to go down where Sodom used to be, today, as I have done, you would find nothing there but a desolate place—slime pits. Jesus said, in Luke 17, verse 29: *“But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all”* (Luke 17:29). It costs to serve Satan. It costs every day. It costs every step of the way.

## **Conclusion**

Now friend, there are some who don’t like the message that I’m preaching today. But the Apostle Paul said, *“These things speak, and exhort”* (Titus 2:15). He said it very clearly and very plainly: *“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire”* (1 Corinthians 3:15). That’s what the Bible says, in 1 Corinthians 3, verse 15. Here was Lot; the angel had to take him by the hand and pulled him out of Sodom, just pulled him out of Sodom. Lot’s wife turned around, and turned into a pillar of salt. *“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss”* (1

Corinthians 3:15). There goes his family. There goes his material possession. There goes the influence he could have had. There goes a life wasted. Was he saved? The Bible calls him *a just man*.

I don't know of a greater tragedy than this: than a man who became a disgrace to grace. There's a system out there, and that system is working on you today. Believe this pastor. And you'd better learn that the world has a prince. The world has a philosophy. The world has a power, and a purpose. And it's working on you today.

Father God, seal the message to our hearts. And I pray, dear God, today, that You would help those of us who are saved by grace not to use grace as an excuse to sin, but, O God, to use grace as an emphasis to love and serve You, that, Lord, we might deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present time, because, Lord, You're coming soon. Lord, I pray for those who are not saved that, today, they might be saved. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# From Grace to Glory

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: January 9, 1994**

**Main Scripture Text: Titus 2:11–15**

*“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,”*

TITUS 2:11

## Outline

Introduction

- I. What Grace Has Brought: Salvation
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  - C. Without the Lord, You’re Disobedient
  - D. Without the Lord, You’re Depraved
- II. What Grace Has Taught: Sanctification
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- IV. What Grace Has Wrought: Glorification

Conclusion

## Introduction

Take the Bible and find Titus chapter 2. In just a moment, we’ll begin reading in verse 11—Titus chapter 2. We’re in a series of messages, from the Book of Titus, dealing with God’s amazing grace. Do you have it? Look up here, and let me tell you something:

In the 1600s, there was a preacher named John Newton, who preached. I don’t think any of you have read any of his sermons. He also wrote some books. But I don’t think any of you have read any of the books that John Newton wrote. But he also wrote a song. And I think every one of us have sung that song. We sang it this morning:

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost but now am found.  
Was blind, but now I see.*

—JOHN NEWTON

John Newton, as a little boy, had a godly mother and a wicked father. His mother died when he was six. His father was a sailor who sailed in the Mediterranean. And

when John Newton was 11 years of age, he went to sea to be a sailor. His father was a wicked man, and Newton took after his father's way. He lived in the depth of sin and debauchery. After a while, John Newton got into the slave trade. He became a slaver, buying and selling human beings, and he went down, down, down, down into sin. He got so low that he became a slave of slaves. For two years, he ate table scraps on the floor that his mistress, who owned him, would toss to him on the floor. That's how low this man got, living in vileness—living in wickedness: John Newton.

There were some sailors aboard a ship that had a concern for the young man, and they gave him a book to read by Thomas à Kempis called *The Imitation of Christ*. He began to read it, partly out of interest, and partly as a jest, but it began to work on his heart. While they were at sea, there came a violent storm. He thought the ship was going to sink. He feared for his life. And then, a great wave came, and washed him overboard. He thought the end had come. He cried out, "O Lord, help!" And another wave came, and washed him back on board. That's all it took for John Newton. And John Newton got saved—I mean *saved saved*. And do you know what *saved* is? God's amazing grace.

He was the one who wrote this song:

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me.*

And when he said that, that wasn't rhetoric. He meant it: "That saved a wretch like me. I once was blind. Now by the grace of God, I can see." I believe it may have been the scripture that we're reading today that encouraged John Newton to write what he wrote. Look at verse 11: "*For the grace of God...*"—do you see it?—"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" (Titus 2:11–15). Titus—that's what Paul wrote his young preacher boy.

I want us to think of God's amazing grace, today. What a wonderful blessing this grace is! And if we look at this passage of Scripture, if you're saved, you're going to see your spiritual biography. If you're not yet saved, you're going to see your spiritual possibility—what could happen to you. There are about five things I want us to see.

## **I. What Grace Has Brought: Salvation**

And the very first thing I want us to see is what grace brought. Look in verse 11: "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation...*" (Titus 2:11). What has grace brought? Grace

has brought salvation. The only way that you can be saved is for grace to bring salvation to you.

Now why do we need to be saved? Well, just put a marker there, in Titus, and turn to Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2 is the parallel passage, and the classic passage, on grace. Look at it—Ephesians 2, verse 1: *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins”* (Ephesians 2:1). Question: Man is terribly sick, and he needs to be healed? Answer: Wrong—Man is dead, and he needs life. Understand that. It’s not just that there’s something wrong. It’s something drastically wrong—radically wrong. You are dead.

So let me give you some *d*’s:

**A. Without the Lord, You’re Dead**

If you’re without the Lord Jesus Christ, you’re dead. You say, “Well, how could I be dead? I’m still existing.” Well, friend, death is not the separation of the soul from the body; death is the separation of the soul from God. You don’t have to be saved to have eternal existence. You’ll have eternal existence somewhere—either in Heaven or Hell. Elvis is alive. Elvis is alive. The question is *where*. Isn’t that right? You see, listen—listen. You have everlasting existence; but, you don’t have everlasting life, until you have Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “I’ve come that you might have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

**B. Without the Lord, You’re Devilish**

Now what? Not only were you dead, but, look, you were devilish. Look, in verse 2: *“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air”* (Ephesians 2:2). Who is the prince of the power of the air? The devil. You were in the grip—the grasp, the domain, the rule—of Satan himself. Jesus said, in John chapter 8 and verse 44: *“Ye are of your father the devil”* (John 8:44).

**C. Without the Lord, You’re Disobedient**

Dead, devilish, and disobedient—that’s the third *d*. Look, if you will, now: *“The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience”* (Ephesians 2:2). Who is there, here, who would stand up and deny that he or she has broken God’s laws? We know that we have. The Bible says, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23). Disobedience. *“The wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6:23). *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die”* (Ezekiel 18:20). That’s why we’re dead.

**D. Without the Lord, You’re Depraved**

And then, look, not only there, but depraved. Look, if you will, as we continue to read here, in this passage of Scripture. And let me go to verse 3: *“Among whom also we all had our conversation”*—that means *our behavior*—*“in times past in the lusts of our flesh,*

*fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;*”—now, watch this—*“and were by nature the children of wrath”* (Ephesians 2:3). We have a sinful nature. We inherited it from our parents—they from theirs, and they from Adam. You have a sinful nature. *“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies”* (Psalm 58:3), the Bible tells us.

David the Psalmist said, *“In sin did my mother conceive me”* (Psalm 51:5). That doesn’t mean that she was a sinner, when she conceived him. It means that he was conceived in sin, that he was conceived with a sinful nature. That’s the reason that man needs more than culture; he needs more than cultivation.

If you’ll take a baby rattlesnake, separate him from all other rattlesnakes, treat him with love and kindness, when he grows up, what will he grow up to be? A big rattlesnake. Friend, he has the venom in him; he has the nature of the rattlesnake. And so it is that nobody is ever cultured or educated into the kingdom.

Now what does this verse say that we are? Dead, devilish, disobedient, and depraved. Do you see it, right there? Well, that’s what it says about us. But now, look in verse 4. Hallelujah! *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us”*—that means to make us alive—*“together with Christ,”*—and then, look at the last part of that verse—*“(by grace ye are saved)”* (Ephesians 2:4–5). See, we’re dead.

Now how can you raise a dead man? Let’s suppose you have a dead man here, today, and we decide we’re going to raise the dead man. Here he is, fellows, let’s help; let’s help raise him. What can we do? Well, Russell, you’re an athlete; let’s bring you over here. You do some pushups in front of him, and do some deep knee bends. Maybe an example—let’s give this dead man an example of what life is like. You think that’ll raise him? No, that won’t work. Well okay, Michael, you’re the scholar on our staff. Suppose you come over here, and give him some lessons on life. If example won’t do it, surely education will raise this dead man. Well, that won’t work. Well then, I’ll tell you how we can raise him: Bernie, you’re the man with compassion on the staff. You come over here, and encourage him. Tell him, “Come on, you can do it. Get up fellow. Try it. We know you can do it.” But he is still dead. But we don’t have to worry, because look at the environment he’s in. Look at all these live people. Let’s put him with a lot of live people. Won’t that raise him? No, you know it won’t.

And you listen to me, dear friend. Can example do it? No. Can education do it? No. Can encouragement do it? No. Can environment do it? No. But that’s exactly what the world is trying, isn’t it? Those things—that’s what the world is trying. You see, a dead man can’t do that, and you can’t do it for a dead man. There is one thing, one person, who can—but God, but God—*grace*. *“For by grace are you saved”* (Ephesians 2:5)—that’s what he’s trying to say. You could not save yourself, anymore than a dead man,

by his own will and volition, could come back to life. And nor could anyone else save you, apart from God, more than anyone else could raise the dead.

All right, so what has grace brought? It's brought salvation. It has brought salvation. You're not saved by the merit of man, but by the mercy of God; not by the goodness of man, but by the grace of God. *Salvation is not a reward for the righteous. It is a gift for the guilty.* This is what grace has brought.

## II. What Grace Has Taught: Sanctification

Now I want you to see something else: not only what grace has brought, but I want you to see what grace has taught. What has grace taught?

Look, if you will, here, in Titus chapter 2, and look at it in verse 11: *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men..."*—now, the grace that has brought us salvation is the grace that teaches us something. And what does it teach us?—*"that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"* (Titus 2:11–12). This is what grace has taught. What grace has brought is salvation. What grace has taught is sanctification.

Because we're saved by grace, that doesn't mean we continue to live in sin. *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid."* The Apostle Paul says, *"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"* (Romans 6:1–2). And so being saved by the grace of God does not mean that you can get saved, and live any way that you want. Once you get saved, you come out of law school, and you get in grace school. And grace school never closes; the teacher never fails to show up. There's a lot of homework to do, and there's no recess. You're continually being taught.

Now learn this about salvation: There is nothing to earn. There is much to learn. Do you know what *discipleship* is? That just simply means "learning." A disciple is a learner. You're learning to live as you are supposed to live. Now that's the reason that none of us have gotten our diploma yet. There's not a one of us that can say, "I have graduated from grace school."

Now you say to me, "Dr. Rogers, I know you're saved, but sometimes, I wonder, when I watch you, and look at you." Well, I wonder that about you, sometimes. But you see, God is not finished with us yet. Philippians chapter 1 and verse 6: *"Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"* (Philippians 1:6). We are being disciplined by the grace of God, and He's still working on us.

Do you know what John Newton also wrote? I found this, and it was a blessing to me. And I'd never read it before, but listen to this—John Newton wrote this—he said, "I am not what I might be. I'm not what I ought to be. I am not what I wish to be. I am not

what I hope to be. But thank God, I am not what I once was. And I can say, with the great apostle, by the grace of God, I am what I am.” You see, He’s still working on us, and we are growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

### III. What Grace Has Sought: Service

Now here’s a third thing I want you to see. First of all, what grace brought: salvation; secondly, what grace taught: sanctification, which is progressively learning to be more and more like the Lord Jesus; thirdly, what grace sought.

What was our God thinking, when He saved us by His grace? Well, look, if you will, in verse 14: *“Who gave himself for us, that”—“that” means, “in order that”—“he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”* (Titus 2:14). That’s what grace sought. That’s what God is in the business of doing.

#### A. We Are Purchased

Now first of all, we are purchased. Look at that verse 14: *“[He] gave himself for us”* (Titus 2:14). That means He purchased us with Himself; He bought us with Himself. We *“were not redeemed with corruptible things...but with the precious blood of Christ”* (1 Peter 1:18–19). I was thinking about grace, the other day. And I was trying to say, “What is *grace*? What is the definition of *grace*?” And I never read a definition in a sentence, that I could say was *grace*, that really satisfied me. But let’s try here, and see what *grace* is. You say, “Let’s start over here.” And we say, “Okay, grace is love.” Well, it is love, but it’s more than love. “So grace is love that gives.” Well, that is true, but grace is more than love that gives. “Grace is love that gives, where there is no merit, where we don’t deserve to have anything given to us.” Well, that is true, but grace is more than that. “Grace is love that gives, where there no there is no merit, and where there is much demerit. Grace is love that God gives to wicked and vile people.” Well, you say, “Yes, that’s what grace is,” but it is more than that. Grace is love that gives, where there’s no merit, where there is demerit, to those who don’t want to give. Did you know that grace has to chase us down?

Did you know that, if you could run faster than God could run, you never would have been saved? Did you know that we love Him, because He first loved us, and that grace seeks to give to vile and wicked people that which they don’t deserve and can never deserve? But wait a minute. It’s more than that. It is grace that gives—grace that gives—where there’s no merit, grace that gives where there’s much demerit, grace that gives to those that resist the gift; and, it is grace that gives at great cost to the giver.

It’s not just that He gave, but He gave Himself. He gave Himself in agony and blood.

*Blessèd Redeemer! Precious Redeemer!*

*Seems now I see Him on Calvary's tree;  
Wounded and bleeding, for sinners pleading,  
Blind and unheeding—dying for me.*

—AVIS M. CHRISTIANSEN

That's grace. When people understand this, they want to write songs. "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound." (John Newton)

## **B. We Are Purified**

Now what did grace seek? What is it that grace has sought? Well, first of all, He purchased us; and then, He purified us. Look at it, again, here, that it says here, in verse 14: "[He] gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself" (Titus 2:14). We are purchased, and we are purified. Now grace does not mean that God says, "Now that I've forgiven you your sins, you just live any way you want." Oh, no, because the grace that saves us begins to purify us from the inside. You see, works are important to a saved person, also.

This passage says we're to be "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:15). What is the difference between the works of an unsaved man, the works that he does in order to try to be saved, and the works that we do because we're saved? Well, the difference is really just a matter of the heart—why we do it; not so much in what we do, but why we do it.

I got a letter from a person, the other day. I know they mean well, but they said, "You know, Pastor, I enjoyed the message on grace." They didn't sign their name. I wish they would sign their name. I would so love to be able to answer these letters. They didn't sign their name. And they said, "You know, Pastor, it was so good when you took the offering, and you said, 'Because of the grace of God, we will give.' And you didn't mention tithing." And they said, "You know, I'm so glad that you didn't mention that, because, you know, tithing—that's Old Testament; that's law." Friend, you missed the point altogether. Because I'm saved, that doesn't mean I don't want to tithe. It means I want to tithe more.

*Anybody who'd let a Jew do more under the law than he'd do under grace is a disgrace to grace.* The Bible says, "The righteousness of the law [is] fulfilled in us" (Romans 8:4). It's not that that we say, "Now I'm saved by grace. I'll live by a lower standard." No, we live by a higher standard. Why—why—we do it is because we have the love of Jesus on the inside.

The law said, "Don't commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). Grace doesn't mean you can. The law says, "Don't steal" (Exodus 20:15). That doesn't mean I can. But now, "the righteousness of the law [is] fulfilled in us" (Romans 8:4).

*I cannot work my soul to save.*

*That work my Lord has done,  
But I will work like any slave  
For the love of God's dear Son.*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

### **C. We Are Peculiar**

See, we're purchased; we're purified. And then, it says we're peculiar: *"that he might redeem...unto himself a peculiar people"* (Titus 2:14). Do you know what the word *peculiar* means? It doesn't mean "odd." Let's forget that. We're not odd. Some of us are, but we're not supposed to be. *Peculiar*—that means "special"—"special."

When a captain—a general—would go to war, and win a great victory, he often would take part of the booty—the prize, the spoils of the battle. He would get a treasure for himself, and he would bring it back—back to his home—and that would be a trophy for himself. That was his peculiar possession.

Now the Bible says, in the ages to come, you and I are going to be trophies of His grace. We are His peculiar possession. The Captain of our salvation went to bloody Calvary, and defeated Satan, and paid the sin debt, and *"redeemed...unto himself a peculiar people"* (Titus 2:14). That's what grace sought. We're purchased. We're purified. We are peculiar; we are different. Grace brought salvation. It taught sanctification. It sought service. We're to serve the Lord.

Listen. Jesus did not bathe this world with His blood to have you serve the world, the flesh, and the devil. What has grace sought? *"[He] gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"* (Titus 2:14).

*Oh! to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!*

—ROBERT ROBINSON

That's what it's all about.

### **IV. What Grace Has Wrought: Glorification**

Now I want you to see something else: not only what grace sought, but what grace wrought. What did grace do?

Look in verse 13, if you will. There, it says that we're to be *"looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"* (Titus 2:13). What has grace wrought? A blessed hope. And we're looking for that blessed hope. It's not over yet. What has begun in grace, in verse 11, will end in glory, verse 13. Grace always ends in glory. We're looking for Jesus to come again. And this is what grace has wrought in us. Don't feel sorry for people who don't have any hope. I've

already read the newspaper pretty well, this morning, and I'll tell you, the world's in a mess. You don't even have to read it; take it from me. And it's not getting better. It is getting worse, and worse, and worse. "If, in this world only, we have hope, we're, of all men, most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:19). But thank God, those of us who are saved can look beyond a hole in the ground. We're not looking for the undertaker; we're looking for the *upper-taker*. We're looking for the Lord Jesus Christ, "*that blessed hope*" (Titus 2:13).

And listen. It is a glad hope, and it is a glorious hope—the blessed hope that Jesus is coming again. I would have loved to have been here on the Earth when the Lord Jesus was here. Now I know, I know, you theologians. It's better that we're here now than then, because they had Jesus beside them; we have Jesus inside us. We have the Holy Spirit.

But there's still... When I travel in the Holy Land, I walk the Sea of Galilee, or the shores of Galilee. I'd like to see Jesus in those sandal shoes, walking those shores. And when we get on the Mount of the Beatitudes, I would love to have been there, and hear the Lord Jesus give the Sermon on the Mount. I would love to have seen Him feed the five thousand. I would love to have seen the Lord Jesus walk on the water, planting His footsteps on the sea, with the wind in His hair, His garments flowing, the salt spray on His face. Well, it's a little salty—fresh water. I guess that's the old Florida boy coming out in me: spray on His face, walking there, on the Sea of Galilee. I would love to have seen that. I probably needed to see Him on the cross. I think I'd be a better preacher, had I seen Him dying in agony and blood. I would love to have seen Him that Easter Sunday morning—wouldn't you?—in His resurrected body. Wouldn't it have been wonderful to see Him ascend into the Glory? I didn't see Him any of those times, but folks, if Jesus Christ were in the heart of Red China today, in bodily form, I'd be making plans to get over there. I don't know how I'd do it, but I'd be making plans to look upon His face. I didn't see Him any of those times, but I'm going to see Him. I'm going to see Him. There's a blessed hope, and, the Bible says, "*the glorious appearing*" (Titus 2:13). He's coming as the conqueror. This is the glorious appearing.

He came the first time. He gave Himself for us—verse 14—to redeem us (Titus 2:14), but He's coming the second time to reign, and to rule over us. The spirit of antichrist is in this world; but, when the 777 comes, He's going to take care of 666. Jesus is coming. This is what grace has wrought: a blessed hope. Do you have that hope? I mean, do you know your future? Has this been a part of you?

When I was a teenage boy, I lived in West Palm Beach, Florida, and I got into trouble that other teenage boys got into. I thank God that I've never known what it was to be drunk or be addicted to cigarettes. I thank God I went to the marriage altar a virgin, and all that, by the grace of God. I thank God for that. But I got into trouble other

teenage boys got into: skipping school, getting in fights, using bad language, taking things that didn't belong to me. I got into those kinds of things. I knew I needed to be saved. I didn't know quite how to be saved. I didn't understand it. I think I would have been saved a lot sooner, had somebody sat down and, with an open Bible, told me how to be saved, and asked me to receive Christ. I would have been. I would have been like a piece of ripe fruit. All they had to do would be just to tell me how to be saved, and I would have been saved; but I didn't know.

But I tell you what happened to our family: We were out in the front yard. My dad was doing some yard work there, on 38<sup>th</sup> Street, in West Palm Beach, Florida. And Mr. and Mrs. Frank came up, and they said to my dad, "We're having a revival meeting at Northwood Baptist Church, and A.D."—that's what they called my dad—"we want you to come, you and your family." My dad said, "Okay, I'll come." And so that night, we were in the revival service, sitting there. I was sitting next to my dad, a teenage boy, and that preacher preached. And I don't know what he preached; I really don't know. I couldn't tell you what he preached. But I'll tell you what did happen: When they had the invitation, my dad, who was a good, decent, hardworking man, an honest man—he was not saved, but a good decent man, outwardly honest, moral man—got up and went forward to give his heart to Jesus Christ. That staggered me. I mean, I wasn't expecting it. I wasn't even thinking about it. And I cannot tell you the conviction that was put in my heart. And I said to myself, "That's exactly, Adrian, what you need to do. You need to be saved." And on the next stanza, I was down there to give my heart to Jesus Christ. And I meant it; as best I knew how, I was giving my heart to Christ, trusting Him to save me.

But you know what happened when I got down there? They said, "We're glad that Adrian Rogers has come." And they got a card, and got a stubby pencil, and I sat there, on that front row, and they filled out the facts about me: name, age, address, *da da da da da da da*. And then, they had the folks stand up, and they said, "Among those who've come today is Adrian Rogers," and I really meant business with God, but they didn't give me any Scripture. They didn't help me to understand—if they did, I don't remember it—about the new birth and Christ in me, salvation by grace. I didn't understand all that. I was so ignorant. Spiritually, if I had taken a course in ignorance, I would have flunked it. That's how dumb I was. I didn't know. I didn't know. But I meant business with God, and I went out to try to live the Christian life by myself. It was almost as if, when God saved me, He forgave the past, and just gave me a new start.

Now it was up to me; I had a new start. Well, I failed. The same old words, sometimes, would come out of my mouth. That fiery temper would come back. I used to fight—street fight. I'm not proud of that. And if you want to fight now, don't come see me. I'm not a fighter anymore; I'm a lover. But I had that old nature in me, but a new nature. There was a battle going on that went on for about two years. But during those

two years, I began to listen and the grace of God began to teach me some things. I began to learn what it was all about. I can remember, on a night after I'd walk my girlfriend home, who is now my wife, I'd stop one block from her house, and one block from my house—we lived two blocks apart—stopped on the corner of 39<sup>th</sup> Street and Calvin Avenue, in West Palm Beach, and I decided I was going to get it settled. And I prayed like this, and I said, “O God, I'm so miserable—so miserable. I don't know whether I'm lost and the Holy Spirit has me under conviction, or whether I'm saved and the devil's trying to make me doubt it.” Have you ever been there? “But I just don't have peace, God, and I want to get it settled tonight.”

But you see, by then, I had learned the language of grace. I had learned about the grace of God. And so I prayed. I just looked straight up into the sky. I didn't bow my head. It was not irreverence, but I just wanted to look into the face of God; and, I said, “O God, you remember when I went forward in that church, and I was sincere. But God, I've been riding a roller coaster up and down, and I want to get it stopped. I want to get it settled. I want to know for certain that I'm saved.” And so I prayed something like this: “O God, right now, tonight, once and for all, now and forever, with every inch and ounce, and every nerve, and sinew, and fiber of my being, I trust You to save me. I'm not depending upon myself. I don't look for a sign, and I don't ask for a feeling. I stand on Your Word. You died for me. You paid my sin debt. I receive You now, once and for all, as my Lord and Savior. If I was, I still am; but if I wasn't, I am now. I'm driving down a peg, right now.”

And folks, I want to tell you something: A river of peace began to flow in my heart, and it's still flowing. Do you know what it was? It was the message of grace that I'm going to preach to you today, that I'm telling you about today. It is “*the grace of God that bringeth salvation*” (Titus 2:11).

Oh, this is what grace has brought!

*Oh! to grace how great a debtor*

*Daily I'm constrained to be!*

—ROBERT ROBINSON

## Conclusion

And oh, I want you to know that grace. You see, what has grace brought? Salvation. What has grace taught? Sanctification. What has grace sought? Service. We're His peculiar people. And what has grace wrought? Glorification. One day—one day—we're going to be like the Lord Jesus Christ, and we'll look upon His face, the One who saved us by His grace. And the One who opened to us the gates of grace will open to us the gates of Glory. That's the grace of God. Isn't that wonderful?

No wonder old John Newton, that wicked sailor, said

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind but now I see.*

—JOHN NEWTON

Bow your heads in prayer. I wonder, how many here today can say, “Pastor Rogers, I know, by the grace of God, and nothing else—I know by the grace of God—that I am saved, and I thank God for it; and, I’m not ashamed to give you the testimony that I know that; I know that, if I died right now, I’d go to Heaven, because of the grace of God”? May I see your hand? Will you lift it as a testimony? Thank you. Take it down. Now if you could not lift your hand, I want to tell you, today, that you can know, beyond the shadow of doubt, today, that you are saved and on your way to Heaven.

If you would pray and say, “Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. I cannot save myself. You died to save me. I trust You, You only, and You always, to save me. And Lord, I trust You enough that I’m not going to be ashamed of You. I’m going to make it public.” Pray that.

Lord, I pray that many will do that today. Amen.

# Living in the Light of the Blessed Hope

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: May 4, 1997**

**Main Scripture Text: Titus 2:11–15**

*“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”*

TITUS 2:13

## Outline

Introduction

- I. A Purifying Hope
- II. An Encouraging Hope
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  - D. Three Things That Are Going to Be Made Right
    - 1. The Bride Belongs With the Bridegroom
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- III. A Unifying Hope
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- VI. A Comforting Hope

Conclusion

## Introduction

Take God’s Word and find Titus chapter 2; and, when you’ve found it, look up here for just a moment. We’ve been in a series of Bible studies on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. And, this morning, we come to the end of this series, and today we want to see what that means to us personally. We’re going to be talking today on the subject, “Living in the Light of the Blessed Hope.” If Jesus Christ is coming—and He is, as surely as I’m standing here—if He’s coming soon—and many feel that He is—what does that mean to me? What does that mean to you?

Look in chapter 2 and verse 11, would you please? Titus chapter 2 and verse 11:

*“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us*

*that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee” (Titus 2:11–15).*

A number of years ago, a submarine sank off the coast of Massachusetts, and that submarine went by the title S-4. It sank in deep waters, and many ships sped to the rescue to see if they could raise that ship and rescue that crew. They sent a diver down many feet beneath the surface, and that diver put his gear up to the shell of that submarine; and, there was being tapped out, on the surface of that submarine, a message in Morse code. And, the diver, who knew Morse code, listened as they continued to tap. And, here was the question that was being asked from inside that submarine; the question was this: “Is there any hope? Is there any hope?” That’s what this world wants to know. I mean, is there any hope?

For some people, there is no hope. As one person said, “It looks like we’re looking into the muzzle of a loaded cannon.” Somebody said that “*hopelessness* is the saddest word in the human language.” For other people, they have hope, but their hope is a false hope. Somebody said, “There is no greater false hope than the first four hours of a diet.” For many people, there is hope, but it is a false hope. For other people, they have hope, but it is an uncertain hope; it is not a certain hope. But, the Bible here, in this passage of Scripture that I just read to you, speaks of the Second Coming of Jesus. It calls the Second Coming of Jesus “*the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,*” and the Bible calls it, there, a *hope*, a certain hope, a “*blessed hope*” (Titus 2:13).

Now, what does the word mean? What does the word *hope* mean, in the Bible? It doesn’t mean “maybe.” We may use it that way in modern English, but that’s not what the word *hope* means in the Bible. The Bible word *hope* means—listen to me now—it means “certainty,” but not just any certainty; it is certainty based on the Word of God. It is rock-ribbed assurance based on the Word of God. But, it means more than that. It means “certainty with anticipation”; it means “something I know is going to happen.” That certainty is based on the Word of God, and I can hardly wait for it to happen.

When I was a boy, my dad used to take us out for a ride on Sunday afternoon, and the kids would be in the backseat. Mom and Dad would be in the front seat, and you know how kids are in the backseat. They get into squabbles; they get into fusses. We’d be riding out around the countryside on Sunday afternoon, and my brother and I would start to fight. Now, my dad would turn around and say, “When you boys get home, I’m gonna whip you.” Now, it wasn’t a threat, but it was a promise. “When you get home, I’m

gonna whip you.” Now folks, I knew my dad well enough to know that was not an idle threat; it was a rock-ribbed assurance. Now, it was just as certain as the sunrise, in my heart and mind. Now, that was certainty, but there was no anticipation.

Now, what I’m talking about is this: that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is a certainty, but it is a blessed hope: *“that blessed hope . . . the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”* (Titus 2:13). Jesus is coming again. Say *amen*. He is coming again. He may come soon. Now, what hope is is simply *faith* of the future tense. We know that we know that we know that, with our eyes, we will see Him. Soon (and very soon) we’re going to see the King.

Now, if that is true—and it is true—then how should we be living in these last days? I want to mention some ways. I want to mention some things that that blessed hope will do for me and will do for you.

## I. A Purifying Hope

First of all, that hope is a purifying hope; that hope is a purifying hope. It teaches us—look in verse 12—teaches us that *“denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”* (Titus 2:12). And then, take your Bibles and turn to 1 John chapter 3, verses 2 and 3. And, here’s what John says in 1 John chapter 3, verses 2 and 3: John says, *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God”*—and, what a blessed privilege! Isn’t that wonderful—that we are the sons, the daughters, the children of God?—*“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be”*—what that means is God’s not finished with us yet. You can’t even begin to dream or to imagine what we’re going to be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. Now, I don’t know exactly what the resurrection body is going to be like, but it’s going to be like Jesus’ glorious resurrection body; and, that’s wonderful. No wonder the psalmist said, *“I shall be satisfied, when I awake in thy likeness”* (Psalm 17:15)—*“now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is”* (1 John 3:2).

Now, we all sign off on that, I hope. Now, notice the *therefore* in this passage of Scripture; and, it says, *“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure”* (1 John 3:3). What if you absolutely knew, absolutely knew, that, in five hours, you would stand face-to-face with Jesus Christ? What would you do? What would you do? I mean, if you absolutely knew, Jim, in five hours, you’d be face-to-face with Jesus Christ? I think I know what you’d be doing: You’d be cleaning up your life, wouldn’t you? If you had any animosity, any un-forgiveness, any dirty literature, anything that is not right with God, you’d be saying, “Hey, I’m going to see the Lord. I’m going to meet my Savior face-to-face in five hours.” Well, what if you knew that you

were going to meet the Lord Jesus Christ in fifteen minutes? You see, we don't know when Jesus is coming; we don't know. And, the Bible says that, if we have this hope in Him, we're going to purify ourselves; we're going to get ourselves clean and keep ourselves clean because, folks, if we don't realize that Jesus Christ is coming, and coming soon, we'll get very lackadaisical (1 John 3:3).

In New England, they were going to build a dam, and the dam was a very important dam to generate power and conserve water. And, down where—in the little valley—where the dam was going to be built, there was a village and some beautiful homes down there. Those homes were bought by the government and condemned, because when the water came in, those homes would all be under water. They said to the people, “The dam is not yet ready to be built. We've signed the contract. Your home is sold, but we're going to let you continue to live in these houses until a certain time, and then you'll have to move out.” It was a beautiful little village, but from the moment the contract was signed, the thing began to deteriorate, and it began to run down; and, the people—they would not repair their houses. They didn't take care of their lawns. They didn't do all the things that people normally do. And, what was once a beautiful little village, a little community, became just almost a slum. People continued to live there for a while. Somebody said, “How do you explain that psychologically?” And, here was the answer: “Where there is no faith for the future, there's no work in the present. Where there is no faith for the future, there is no work in the present.” If people have a hope, if people can see that there's something in the future, then they're going to take care of the present. Now folks, you and I have a faith in the future; and, therefore, we are to be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Let me give you another Scripture here. Well, you're in 1 John chapter 3. Go on to chapter 2, and look in verse 28: “*And now, little children—and now, little children—abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming*” (1 John 2:28). Did you know some are going to be saved when Jesus comes, but they're going to be ashamed? If Jesus Christ were to come right now, this moment, some of you who are members of this church—you'll say, “Hallelujah!” Others of you would want to crawl under the seat and would be ashamed! I spoke to one of the members of our church. I'll not call his name—a dear man. I loved him. But, he was on his deathbed. He called me into his bedroom. He said, “Pastor, I am dying.” He said, “I love Jesus. He has saved me. I know I'm going to Heaven.” But, he said, “Soon I'm going to meet the Lord.” And, he said to me, “Pastor, I am not afraid to die!” But, he said, “Pastor, I'm ashamed to die. I'm ashamed to die!” And then, he said, “Pastor, I've not been a soul winner.” And, he told me some other things that he could've done and should've done. You know what the Bible says here? Whether you're dying or whether Jesus is coming, “*he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself,*” and,

“abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, ye shall not be ashamed, but have confidence before Him at His coming” (1 John 3:3; 1 John 2:28).

When I was a little boy, my dad was in the Coast Guard. He lived up the Florida coast from where we lived in West Palm Beach. My dad would get a leave, every so often, and would come home. He had a Model-A Ford, and we'd be playing in the neighborhood. Before my dad would go away, he would tell me, “Adrian, do this, and this, and this; and, don't do thus, and thus, and thus,” and he would give me assignments to—yard work and other things—and tell me how to obey my mama. Sometimes I would, and sometimes I didn't. But, I tell you, it made a lot of difference as to how I was living, when I heard the sound of that Model-A Ford coming around the corner. There were times... A Model-A Ford—this was a 1931 Model-A Ford. It had a running board. You kids don't know what a running board is, but that's a board on either side of the car, where you can come, and step on it, and ride along. Or, people getting out of the car would step on that running board to step down. My dad would come, and I would see him. If I'd been doing all he told me to do, what a day that would be! I would run to meet him and ride the last half of the block on that running board with my head in the window, hugging my dad and kissing him. But, other times when I heard that Model-A, I'd head the other direction. Now, he's still my dad, but, oh folks, listen, when Jesus comes, I want to run to meet Him. Don't you? I don't wanna be ashamed! “[*He*] that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3). So, put it down in your heart and in your mind. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is a purifying hope. If you believe that Jesus Christ is coming at any moment, you're going to want to be living a pure, holy life, and you're going to be moving one step higher in holiness.

## II. An Encouraging Hope

Now, I'll tell you something else it is: Not only is it a purifying hope, but the Second Coming of Jesus is an encouraging hope. You don't have to go around with your head between your knees, even if it's getting dark—as we say, “It's getting gloriously dark.”

Put this Scripture down: Colossians 1. Just turn to it in your Bibles—Colossians chapter 1. And, look, if you will, in verses 16 and 17. It speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, our dear Savior, and it says, “*For by him were all things created*”—this is Colossians 1, 16 and 17—“*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist*” (Colossians 1:16–17). Now, what does that verse mean?

### A. God Is the Power of Creation

It means, ladies and gentlemen, that absolutely nothing is out of control—nothing. You

say, “Well, the devil’s having a heyday.” God has a leash on him. There’s only so much that he can do, and the Bible teaches that our God is the power of creation. All things were made by Him. Do you think this world, with its complexity and intricacies, came about by random, blind, impersonal chance? Do you believe that out of nothing everything came, and out of inorganic matter life came? Do you believe that? Friend, it takes a whole lot more faith to believe in evolution than it does the Word of God. I mean, you think what they’re asking us to believe. It’s His handiwork. It was made by Him.

### **B. God Is the Preserver of Creation**

He is the power of creation, and He is the preserver of creation. This verse says, “*By him all things consist*” (Colossians 1:17). What keeps it from flying apart? You say, “Well, gravitational pull.” Well, tell me what that is. You say, “That’s what holds everything together.” Well, what holds everything together? You say, “Gravity,” and you just keep explaining it by defining it. But, trying to explain it by defining it you never defined it. Do you want me to tell you what holds everything together? “*By him all things consist*” (Colossians 1:17). He’s the glue of the galaxies. He is the One who regulates this universe. He is the power of creation. He is the preserver of creation.

### **C. God Is the Purpose of Creation**

And, He is the purpose of creation. This verse says it was all made by Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16). People say, “What is the world coming to?” Come up close; I’ll tell you: It’s coming to Jesus. This little preposition *for* is *epsom*—you know, the *sigma* in the Greek language, pronounced ice like ice cube. All things are *ice* Him, *for* Him. And, that preposition means “movement toward an object.” This world is moving to Jesus, and Jesus will rule and reign. And, “*the earth shall be filled with the...glory of the LORD, as the waters that cover the sea*” (Habakkuk 2:4). Jesus is, friend, the controller of this universe. He is the king upon His throne.

Now listen—listen—the world is in a mess today. It’s in a mess today, and people are talking about a new world order. It’s just a different disorder, is all it is. C. S. Lewis said, “You can’t make a good omelet out of bad eggs—no matter how you stir it.”

### **D. Three Things That Are Going to Be Made Right**

You know what’s wrong in the world today? There are three basic things that are wrong in the world today. And, when Jesus comes, this is why it’s such an encouraging hope: When Jesus comes, there are three things gonna be made right.

#### **1. The Bride Belongs With the Bridegroom**

First of all, the bride belongs with the Bridegroom. Who is the bride? The Church. Who is the Bridegroom? The Lord Jesus. When Jesus comes, the bride is going to be swept

up to meet the Bridegroom. I've stood down here so many times with a young, budding bridegroom, and I'd stand here and watch him. I watch her for a while, and I watch him for a while; and, I see that bride coming down that aisle. I've told you before, I've never seen an ugly bride. I've seen some that just did make it, but I've never seen an ugly bride. And, here she comes down that aisle, and here he comes. And folks, I get to stand here and watch that. I see that man as he goes over here and stands by her. What a blessing that is! Friend, the Lord Jesus used that as an illustration of that time when we're going to meet the Lord. I'm telling you, what's wrong in the world today is this: that the bride is not yet with her groom; but, one of these days, there's going to be that wedding; one of these days, the marriage supper of the Lamb.

## **2. The Criminal Belongs in Prison**

I'll tell you something else that's wrong with this world: The criminal belongs in prison. Who is the criminal? His name is Satan. Don't ever talk about the devil in Hell. The devil is not in Hell. He will be in Hell. Hell is prepared for the devil and his angels. And, the Bible tells us, in Revelation chapter 20 and verse 10: "*And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone*" (Revelation 20:10). He will be. And, the reason we're having so much problem today is that the criminal is running loose.

## **3. The King Belongs on His Throne**

I'll tell you a third thing that's gonna make it right: when the bride is with the Groom, when the criminal's in prison, and when the King is on His throne. The King is not yet on His throne. Now, He's on the throne in Heaven, but I'm talking about what's wrong here, on this Earth. How many times have you prayed this prayer: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth, as it is in Heaven." Have you ever prayed that prayer? 'Course you have! "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth!" Some people don't believe that Jesus is going to rule again on this Earth, or rule on this Earth. Friend, He is! Why would Jesus have taught us to pray that prayer if He didn't intend for that prayer to be answered? Well, I wanna ask you a question: Has it been answered? Do you think His kingdom has come and His will is being done, on Earth as it is in Heaven? Do you think this is what Heaven is like? No. Will it be done? Absolutely! Jesus is going to reign.

Let me give you one of the great verses, one of my favorite verses: 1 Timothy chapter 6 and verse 15: "*Which in his times*"—(talking about Jesus)—"*he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords*" (1 Timothy 6:15). I can hardly wait. When the bride will be with the Groom, when the criminal will be in prison, and when the King will be on His throne.

Now folks, that is an encouraging hope. Isn't it? That is an encouraging hope. Well, what does that mean to me? What does that mean to you? Folks, we ought to put a smile on our face. We might have to go to the doctor and have our ears moved back so we'd have more room, make room for that smile. Our King is on His way! After the

resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is not a negative note in the New Testament. We're not waiting to see who's going to win. Satan's back was broken at Calvary, and Jesus is coming to rule and to reign. The Second Coming of Jesus is a purifying hope. I'm moving up one step higher in purity. The Second Coming of Jesus is an encouraging hope. I am moving up one step higher in courage, and confidence, and assurance.

### III. A Unifying Hope

I'll tell you a third thing that that hope is: The Second Coming of Jesus is a unifying hope. It brings us together.

Take your Bibles now and turn to 1 Thessalonians; and, look, if you will, in verses 12 and 13; 1 Thessalonians chapter 3, verses 12 and 13; 1 Thessalonians 3, verses 12 and 13: *"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another"*—God wants us to increase, to move up one step higher; and, He wants us to abound in love one toward another—*"and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end"*—now, listen—*"he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God"*—we've already talked about that—*"even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints"* (1 Thessalonians 3:12–13). Now, he links the Second Coming of Jesus with holiness and love for all of the saints. Now, you know, if His coming is drawing nearer and closer, we ought to be drawing nearer and closer to one another. Surely there are some things that ought to divide people. *It's better to be divided by truth than united in error.* But, those who are God's children, those who love the Lord Jesus Christ—if we believe that Jesus is coming at any moment, you know what we ought to be doing, according to Paul there, as he told the church at Thessalonica? We ought to be having a fervent love one toward another.

I want you to imagine a scene. You walk into a home. Let's say there's a father, and a mother, and several children; and, let's say that they're red in the face. They're calling each other names. They're kicking shins; they're pulling hair. They're having a family feud. And, you say, "What on Earth is going on here? Why are you—members of the same family—at one another's throats? What is happening?" They said, "Well, you know, we have a beloved elder brother. His name is William. He's been away for many, many years. We received a telegram signed by him that says he's coming home, and we have met to make plans for the homecoming of our elder brother." "Well, why you having such a fuss?" "Well, we don't just agree as to how he's coming. Susie says he's coming by car, but Jim says he's coming by train. But, Dad says he's coming by airplane, and Mother says he's bringing some friends with him. And, others say, 'No, he's coming by himself,' and we just don't agree on the details. So, we're fighting about it." About that time, the door opens; and, there stands William, and the whole family is fighting over his coming. Does that remind you of anything? Somebody says, "Well,

He's coming back before the Tribulation." "No, He's coming back after the Tribulation." There's pre-Tribulation, mid-Tribulation, amillennial, postmillennial. Friend, listen, it's fine to have some opinions about those things, but you need to get off the program committee and get on the welcome committee. I mean, there are a lot of details that none of us understand about prophecy, but we know that we know that our elder brother, the Lord Jesus, is coming, right?

And, when we have this hope in Him, we are to be encouraging one another and loving one another! Hebrews 10 and verse 25 says we are not to forsake "*the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching*" (Hebrews 10:25). You know what that means? It means the closer we get to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the closer we ought to be to one another, the more we ought to love one another, the more we ought to be in the house of God.

Some of you are listening to me by television. If you think this television program is an excuse or substitute for church attendance, you're dead wrong. You're dead wrong. It's for those who are not yet going to church, and those who cannot come to church, and those who have been to church, but it is never a substitute for being in the house of God. "You are not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Hebrews 10:25). Some go to church three times: when they're hatched, and matched, and dispatched. First time, they throw water. Second time, they throw rice. The third time, they throw dirt. You ought to go to church! Why? Why church attendance? You say, "Well, Pastor Rogers, I don't have to go to church to be a Christian." That's right, you can be saved anywhere. But, if you love Jesus, you're gonna love what Jesus loves, and He loves the Church. The Church is not this building. It is the people gathered together.

And, when you're here this morning, do you know what you're saying—those of you who are in this building this morning? You are saying two things: You may be saying something else, but I tell you there are two things that you are saying by being here—living in light of the soon coming of Jesus Christ—there are two things that you say when you're in that seat, this morning. Number one: You're saying, "God is important to me." Number two: You're saying, "You other people are important to me." That's what you're saying. You're saying, "God is important to me, but not only is God important to me; the Church is important to me! My brothers and sisters are important to me." Listen to Hebrews 10, verse 25 again: "*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another*"—that means "*building up one another*"—"*and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching*" (Hebrews 10:25). And, moms and dads, you better see to it that your children are in Sunday school. You better see to it that they're with the people of God. As the days get darker, things are

going to get more and more vile, and they're gonna be pulled, and pulled, and pulled, and pulled. Get them in the house of God. Get them under the Word of God. Get them in a loving fellowship, a Bible study. And, as we believe that Jesus Christ is coming, we need to be moving up one step higher in faithfulness. Be faithful to your church. Be faithful to your Sunday school class. Be faithful to your brothers and sisters in Christ. The Bible teaches it!

#### **IV. A Challenging Hope**

This hope—this hope that we have—is a purifying hope. It is an encouraging hope. It is a unifying hope. I'll tell you what else it is: It is a challenging hope. What does it challenge us to do? To win souls.

Now, you're in 1 Thessalonians. Look in chapter 2, verse 19. Paul had gone to the place where...it was just filled with evil. And, he told them about Jesus, and they got saved. And then, he says (talking about the Second Coming of Jesus): *"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"* (1 Thessalonians 2:19). Friend, underscore that in your Bible: 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 19. He says, "When Jesus comes, my hope, my joy, my crown will be you, because I led you to Jesus!" When Jesus comes, when the Church is caught up, will there be anybody in that crowd that you have led to Him?

*'Must I go and empty-handed?'*  
*Must I meet my Savior so?*  
*Not one soul with which to greet Him,*  
*Must I empty-handed go?*  
—CHARLES C. LUTHER

You see, listen, we preach this series on Bible prophecy. Is that just simply meant to settle your curiosity? No, it's a motivating hope. It's a challenging hope—to bring people to Jesus Christ. Some people sitting in this auditorium don't really believe what they say they believe.

Suppose there's a house on fire. It's burning. It's caving in. And, let's suppose in the nursery is a little baby asleep, and the mother in that house is there; and, she sees that the house is on fire. And now, let's suppose that she is going to all of the closets in that house, and she's gathering the wire coat hangers and putting them in little bundles, putting them in paper bags, and carrying them out to the curb, because the house is burning down. And, the whole time that baby is there asleep in the crib, just about to perish in the flames. What would you say about that woman? I'd say she's mentally unbalanced. She's demented—that she would be gathering coat hangers when she's got a baby there that needs to be rescued from the flames. You see, folks, we're busy about a lot of things, but there's nothing more important—listen to your pastor—there's

nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing more important than getting people saved, if you believe Jesus is coming again. Your business is a bunch of coat hangers. Your garden is a bunch of coat hangers. Your front lawn is a bunch of coat hangers. Your clothes is a bunch of coat hangers. Your vacation—a bunch of coat hangers, compared to getting people saved before the Rapture.

You say, “I can’t do those things?” You can do any of those things, if they help you to be a better soul winner and a better Christian; but, if they keep you from doing that, then it’s wrong for you. It’s wrong for you. We are in the business of bringing souls to Jesus Christ; and, if you believe that Jesus Christ is coming—you’re saved by His grace and for His glory—I’m moving up one step higher in soul winnings. If I’ve never been a soul-winner, by God’s grace, I will. I don’t want the trumpet to sound! I don’t want to stand before the Lord and not have one soul—not one soul—that I’ve won to Jesus Christ. You take people that this world calls *unworthy, illiterate, impoverished, stupid, sinful, weak, vile*. You name the worst things you can say about them—is what the world says about them. You led them to Jesus Christ, and you wait ’til that day when you see them shining like a beautiful gem in His crown, made like His likeness, and you’ll realize why the Bible says, “He that wins souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30). I’m going to tell you something, folks: All the soul winning you’re ever going to do, you’re gonna do in this day and in this age. You’re not going to do any soul winning after the Rapture, that I can find in the Bible. If you’re going to do it, you’d better get busy doing it.

## V. A Stabilizing Hope

Now, let me say something else about this hope. This hope not only is a challenging hope; it’s a stabilizing hope.

Turn to James chapter 5. Look in verse 8. Here’s what James says: “*Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh*” (James 5:8). Don’t be blown about. ‘Stablish your hearts! You know the trouble with many of us? We’re just not stable. You know, it’d be difficult to put all the members of this church in these two services that we have Sunday morning, if they all came on the same Sunday. Isn’t that true? You come one Sunday; and then, next Sunday, you don’t come. Do you know why you don’t come next Sunday? “Well, we had company, Pastor, and so we had to stay home. Mama had to stay home and cook for company.” I’ve been a pastor for forty-five years. We have never stayed home because company came. You say, “You’re a pastor.” That’s right, I’m a pastor. I’m gonna tell you something, friend: This is not a job for me. It is a ministry. And, it takes as much of the blood of Jesus Christ to save you as it does me. And, your friends and your company don’t pay you a compliment when they

come to you and your house on the day you're supposed to be in worship. That just simply means, "We know that your worship is not very important to you," or, "We wouldn't come on that day." You tell those folks, "We're going to church. You wanna go?" Listen, you just be faithful! Be faithful! Don't blow hot and blow cold! James says, "Stablish your heart! The coming of the Lord draws nigh" (James 5:8). Be faithful, weary pilgrim. Our King is on His way.

## VI. A Comforting Hope

Let me say the last thing. This hope is not only a stabilizing hope—and, I wanna move up one step higher in faithfulness—but this hope is a comforting hope, a comforting hope.

Turn, if you will, to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. Look, if you will, in verses 16 through 18: "*For the Lord himself*"—ha hah, not some event in history—"*for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord: and so shall we ever be with the Lord*"—and, notice what he says—"*Wherefore comfort one another with these words*" (1 Thessalonians 4:16–18). The Second Coming of Jesus is a great comforting hope.

I was with a friend, this morning, who has just said goodbye to his wife until Jesus comes, when he'll meet her face to face. And, we prayed about it. What do you say? What do you say to somebody who has just said goodbye to his wife? What do you say to a mother who has had a little baby snatched from her bosom? What do you say to the person who has just been to the doctor and gotten that bad report? What do you say to those people? I'll tell you what you say to them: "This is not God's final plan. Our King is on His way. There's coming a resurrection. We're going to get a glorified body. We're going to be swept up together to meet the Lord in the air. We'll sing, and shout, and dance about! The Lamb will dry our tears. We'll have a grand homecoming week the first ten thousand years, when Jesus comes." It's not over yet! It's a comforting hope.

The former pastor of this church was Robert G. Lee. He used to tell a story that always moved my heart. He said, "When I was a little boy," he said, "we lived on a farm. It was such a poor farm." He said, "It was so poor you couldn't even raise an umbrella on it, much less the mortgage." And, he said, "I was lying on the front porch. Everybody else had gone out into the fields. My mama was there, and I had my heels sticking up in the air and my chin tucked in my hands; and, I saw my mama as she was working, and I looked at my mama's hands. And, they were toil-worn. And, I thought about my mama, and I said, "Mama, tell me the happiest day of your life." He said, "I thought, perhaps, she would tell me about the time when my daddy, a tall man with dark eyes, spoke to

her about his love out by the garden gate, but she didn't mention that." He said, "I thought maybe she would tell me about the time, over by the corner of the porch, where he proposed to her and asked her to be his bride. But, she didn't tell me that." He said, "I thought maybe she would tell me about the time when they stood in a little cottage and made their wedding vows, where they kept all the days of their life, but she didn't tell me that. She said, 'Son, you've asked me a hard question, but I wanna tell you what I believe was the happiest day of my life.' She said, 'I was a little girl. There was a war between the states, between the North and the South, and my daddy, your grandfather Bennett, went off to fight in that war. We stayed home. The women had to work in the fields.' She said, 'We got our coffee from parched corn. Our tea was sassafras tea. We got our salt from the floor of the smokehouse. We just had enough to live on. We received word that your granddaddy, my daddy, had been killed in the war.' She said, 'I remembered my mother. She didn't cry much when she heard that. I wondered if she really cared.'" And then, he said, "She said, 'I would hear her at nighttime, putting her face in her pillow, just sobbing out her heart.'"

And, Dr. Lee's mother said, "And my heart was broken as a little girl, because my mama's heart was broken, and my daddy was dead.' She said, 'Then, one day,' she said, 'we were sitting on the front porch at the old river home.' She said, 'My mama had a bowl of beans that she was snapping and straining those beans.' And, she said, 'She looked across, down the river road. She saw a man walking, and she said to me, 'Elizabeth, I declare that looks like your daddy—that man.' She kept snapping the beans. Then, after a while, she said, 'Elizabeth, look! He walks like your daddy.' And, I said, 'Oh now, Mama, Daddy's dead. Don't get yourself upset.' And then, she said, 'That man crossed a little cotton patch and started toward the house, and my mama threw those beans in the air. They went all over the front porch. And, she said, 'Elizabeth, it's your daddy!' And, he had one arm that was gone, his sleeve pinned up, walking across that cotton field.' And, she said, 'My mama ran out there and embraced my daddy, and they kissed and hugged; and, he put that one arm he had left around him, around her, and held her up close.' Then, she said, 'I ran as fast as my little legs would carry me, and put my hand around Daddy's knees, and hugged him, and reached my hand up that empty sleeve, and felt that funny little arm.' And, she said, 'Son, I believe that was the happiest day of my life.'" But friend, you wait 'til Jesus comes. You wait 'til our Lord comes. Wait 'til we're caught up together with the loved ones of all of the ages to meet Jesus in the air. *"Wherefore comfort one another with these words"* (1 Thessalonians 4:18). We're not looking toward a hole in the ground. We're looking toward a cleavage in the sky, when our Lord will come. It is a blessed hope, and we are to be living in the light of that hope! And, we're to be moving up one step higher.

## Conclusion

Now, I want you to get that card that was given to you. Take it right now, and look at it. On that card is a place for you to make an inventory. On that card—on one side is for you to check. This is for nobody else. This is for your eyes only, for your eyes only. I don't want to see it. I don't need to see it. You're not gonna turn this in to anybody. It is yours. It is between you and God. We are not checking up on you. I don't want you to tell me what you put on your card, unless you want to; but, I want you to look on that card. And, on the left-hand side, you're going to measure where you are now. Now, since it's between you and God, both you and God know the truth—just be truthful with Him. You and God know the truth! You assess where you are now. And then, in the light of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, I want you to mark what God the Holy Spirit is laying on your heart about moving up. Now, some may not be able or willing to move like others move, but there's not a one of us—not a one of us, not a one of us—that cannot move up one step higher. So, we're gonna have a little time just for you personally to check that card.

Now, notice it's perforated. If you like—you don't have to do this—but you can sign your name on the half that has nothing else on it but your name—that's all it has on it—and put it in the offering plate. Now, if you put it in the offering plate, what we're going to do is hold it for a few weeks and then mail it back to you, just as a reminder to you. That's all it means. You don't have to do that, if you don't want to; but, if you'd just like to get a card from yourself, put your address on it, and we'll mail it back to you. It won't say a thing, 'cept you'll just get it back. And, it will be a reminder of this commitment. Now, the commitment card that you have is yours to keep. You will not turn it in. It is between you and God. We want you to make a commitment to the Lord, and what we want you to say is, "By His grace and for His glory, I will move up one step higher." You ready to do that? Just do it. Let's...we're gonna take a few moments now, while you fill out those cards.

# Godly Zeal and Ungodly Extremism

*By Adrian Rogers*

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**Main Scripture Text: Titus 2:11–15; 3:8–11**

*“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”*

TITUS 2:13–14

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## Introduction

Take God's Word and find Titus chapter 2—would you do that. Today, we're going to be talking about, "Godly Zeal and Ungodly Extremism." Now in the passage that we're going to read, Paul is going to be telling Titus to be zealous of good works. And that word *zealous* has the idea of being on fire—literally, the idea of boiling. Spurgeon said, "You might as well have a chariot without horses, or a sun without sunbeams, or Heaven without joy, as to have a man of God without zeal." And I've often told you, the need of the hour, this day and this age, is a burning, blazing, passionate, emotional love for the Love Jesus Christ. And we never have to be ashamed of our zeal. As a matter of fact, we're commanded to be on fire, to be zealous of good works.

Well, let's just read the passage. Begin in Titus 2, and verse 11: *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people,"*—and here's our word—*"zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee"* (Titus 2:11–15).

God wants us to be on fire. As a matter of fact, Jesus had rather have you cold—listen—He'd rather have you cold than lukewarm. Revelation 3, verses 15 and 16—Jesus said to that lukewarm church at Laodicea, *"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm...I will spue thee out of my mouth"* (Revelation 3:15–16). God says, "You're nauseous to Me, with your lukewarmness." And so we ought to be on fire for Jesus.

But having said that, there is a misguided zeal that is ugly. It is fanaticism. It is ungodly extremism. And we also learn about that in this Book of Titus; and, we're going to share that with you. So today, our message has two major points: First of all, we're going to be talking about the zeal that displays the grace of God; and then, we're going to be talking about extremism that distorts the grace of God.

### I. The Godly Zeal that Displays the Grace of God

Now first of all, let's think of the godly zeal—the godly zeal—that displays the grace of God. Remember what he says there, in verse 14—we are *"a peculiar people, zealous of good works"* (Titus 2:14).

Now what should we be zealous about?

#### A. Zealous About Worship

Well, hey, we ought to be zealous about worship—what we're doing this morning, worshipping the Lord. Jesus was zealous about His worship. As a matter of fact, when

the house of God had been taken over by carnality, Jesus was moved with anger. And John chapter 2, verse 17 says this: *“And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up”* (John 2:17). Do you have a zeal for the house of God? Do you? I mean, are you zealous for what we’re doing this morning, or do you just simply yawn in the face of God when you come to worship? We ought to be zealous about our worship.

Jesus warned us about half-hearted worship. He said to the church at Laodicea, in Revelation chapter 2, verse 4: *“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because you have left your first love”* (Revelation 2:4). What is first love? That’s honeymoon love. Do you remember your honeymoon? Oh, I can remember ours—how sweet, how tender, how romantic, how exciting it was! Never get over that first love. Now when our Lord was talking to the church at Ephesus, He didn’t rebuke them because they didn’t love Him. They loved Him, but they just did not love Him with that first love. Half-hearted worship is an insult to Almighty God. If He’s worth anything, He’s worth everything. Say *amen!*

### **B. Zealous About Truth**

All right, you know, we’re to be zealous about our worship. We’re to be zealous about the truth. Notice how this passage begins, in verse 11: *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men”* (Titus 2:11). And then, verse 15: *“These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority”* (Titus 2:15). We are to be very zealous about the Word of God. And think of the truths that we just read about.

He talked about grace in verse 11. Take away grace, you don’t have Christianity.

He talks about the deity of Christ in verse 13; he calls Him *“the great God and our Saviour”* (Titus 2:13). Jesus is God. That is a non-negotiable. That’s a hill we can die on. Jesus is God.

He talks about the Second Coming of Jesus. We’re looking for *“the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”* (Titus 2:13). He mentions that in verse 13. May I tell you the only hope for America—the only hope for the world—is the Second Coming of Jesus?

He talks about redemption there: *“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us...and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”* (Titus 2:14).

We need to get a bulldog grip on these things and never, never, never—no, never—let them go. We’re to be zealous of the truth. And you’ve often heard me say, *“It’s better to be divided by truth than it is united in error.”* Jesus didn’t come to make everybody happy. Matthew chapter 10, verse 34—He said, *“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword”* (Matthew 10:34). The most divisive force on Earth is Jesus Christ.

### C. Zealous About Holiness

Not only are we to be zealous about our worship, and zealous about the truth; hey, we ought to be zealous about holiness. Why, *I would to God that Baptists were as much afraid of sin as they are sinless perfection*. Look in verse 12 of this chapter: “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:12). Look, if you will, also, in verse 14: “[He] gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people” (Titus 2:14)—not an odd people—*peculiar*. You be holy, and you’re going to be different in this world. We ought to be zealous about holiness.

### D. Zealous About Serving the Lord

We ought to be zealous about serving the Lord. Look again in verse 14—the last part: “zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). We want to be zealous about service.

## II. What Godly Zeal Will Fix

Did you know, when you have zeal, when you love Jesus as you ought to love Jesus—let me tell you—the problems will be taken care of.

### A. The Attendance Problem

The attendance problem will be taken care of. We have many of our members who are not here this morning. If all of our members came to one service, we couldn’t put them in. Some of them are sitting back, drinking coffee, reading the paper right now, when they could be in the house of God. God have mercy! And if you’re listening on television, I’m talking to you, mister; I’m talking to you. You ought to be in the house of God—you ought to be in the house of God. When you love God, you’re going to love what God loves. And Jesus loves it so much, He shows up here every Sunday. “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). It would solve the attendance problem.

### B. The Giving Problem

I’ll tell you what: it’d also solve the giving problem. When you love, you want to give. What man, what woman, has not bought a gift that they could not afford for somebody that they love? We all have. Why? Just love. We just want to give. Friend, you don’t have to beg people to give, when they love.

Sometimes, people say to me, “You know, Pastor, I have difficulty figuring out my tithe. Should I tithe on capital gain? Should I tithe before and after taxes?” Mister, if it were coming to you, you’d have no difficulty figuring it out. I mean, if it were coming to you, you’d have no difficulty whatsoever figuring it out. It’s a matter of love. You can give without loving; you cannot love without giving.

### C. The Service Problem

Oh, you think about the service problem. When people are full of zeal, that takes care of service. You wouldn't have to beg people to work in the nursery, to work at Vacation Bible School, to sing in the choir, if they were full of zeal for the Lord Jesus Christ. You mothers out here—when your baby is sick, you don't have to be begged to take care of that baby. Why? Because you love. The evangelism problem is bringing people to Jesus Christ. Jesus said to Peter, "If you love Me, feed My sheep" (John 21:16–17). He didn't say, "If you love sheep, or love feeding sheep..." "If you love Me, feed My sheep."

### D. The Disagreement Problem

The disagreement problem can be taken care of by zeal. If we love God, we're going to love one another. Now folks, I'm telling you, we need a zeal that gets us beyond this lukewarm moderation. If a man's house is on fire, you don't tell him moderately that his house is on fire. If Joyce says, "Adrian, do you love me?" I don't say, "Moderately." I don't even say, "Conservatively." I'm a conservative, but she wants me to love her liberally. We are to love; we're to love. If anybody were to lay his hand on her, I wouldn't defend her moderately. We need some zeal, and not to be lukewarm. Revelation 3, verse 16: "*So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth*" (Revelation 3:16). And then, He said, in Revelation chapter 3, verse 19: "*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent*" (Revelation 3:19). So there is godly zeal that displays the grace of God.

## III. The Ungodly Extremism that Distorts the Grace of God

Now I want to leave that point, because, actually, I'm talking, not about godly zeal, but ungodly extremism, that distorts the grace of God. Now that is a problem. Now the devil, if he cannot keep us from being zealous, will want to make us extremists.

Now you're in chapter 2. Just turn over to chapter 3—Titus chapter 3—and look, if you will, in verse 8: "*This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.*" Now that's godly zeal. Okay: "*These things are good and profitable unto men.*" But now, notice the little conjunction *but*: "*But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself*" (Titus 3:8–11). Now what he's talking here about is a misguided zeal, a misguided extremism, a fanaticism that is divisive. It is destructive. It is deadly. It divides churches. It divides communities. It divides homes.

Now we're to live by principles; but you know, you can take a principle, and move it to an extreme, and distort it.

Something you might understand: A steak is to be cooked, but it's not to be cremated, amen? You want your steak cooked, but, hey, there's a time when you back down. Principles are like a hammer. You can take a hammer and build a house with it, or take the same hammer and beat somebody to death with it. And people can take any kind of an issue and become an extremist over even a good issue.

That's the reason Paul said, in the Book of Philippians—Philippians 4:5: *“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”* Now you said, “Pastor, you said we're to be zealous.” That's right. And we're also to be moderate. And there's a perfect balance in the Word of God.

One of my verses that I repair to often is 2 Thessalonians 3:1–2: *“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.”* Have you met an unreasonable person? God have mercy! Unreasonable people—they have no flexibility; they have no balance. They are fanatics, extremists, misguided. They do incalculable harm to the cause of Christ.

#### **A. Extremism Is Foolish**

Now notice what Paul says about this extremism here—verse 9—look: first of all, it's foolish—it's foolish. You see that in verse 9? *“But avoid foolish questions”* (Titus 3:9). There are people who fancy themselves theologians. They can split a theological hair into 16 equal divisions, but they have no relationship to that which really matters in a church.

One of the former pastors of this church, Dr. Robert G. Lee, a dear friend of mine—I had the joy of doing his funeral, and I wouldn't even say he was a friend of mine; I'd just like to say I was a friend of his. What I mean by that is, I was just honored to be in his presence. But Dr. Lee told a story, one time. I may have repeated it to you. I've never been able to get it out of my mind. He told, Brother Mark, about a time in this church when the floodgates of Glory were open. He was giving an invitation, and people were coming from everywhere to give their hearts to Jesus; and, there was weeping, and the Holy Spirit was all over the place; and, God was just blessing in a wonderful way. And a lady came down the aisle in the midst of that invitation. She said, “Dr. Lee...”—I can just hear him saying it, right now. She said—“Dr. Lee, did you know that there were people on Earth before Adam?” Now this is in the invitation, and people are being saved. It flew all over him. He said, “No, ma'am, I don't know it; you don't know it; nobody knows it. Go back to your seat.” You see, she had some little crazy idea and had no better sense than to understand, in the middle of an invitation when people are getting saved, not to bring up something foolish like that.

That's what he's saying. Look at it: *“Avoid foolish questions.”* Don't get drawn into

endless debates about the difference between *tweedle dee* and *tweedle dum*.

## B. Extremism Is Fractious

Not only is it foolish; it is fractious. Notice again in verse 9: “Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings” (Titus 3:9). These things sometimes divide people that ought not to be divided. The words here, “*contentions, and strivings,*” have the idea of bickering, and judging, and criticizing. Almost always, these fanatics are self-centered, and they’re self-willed. Jude described them in Jude 1:19: “*These be they who separate themselves, sensual,*”—*sensual*, that is, “of the flesh”—“*having not the Spirit.*”

People can divide in churches over incidentals—things that really don’t make that much difference. In a particular church, they had, in this church, an American flag sitting on the platform. In an open business conference, a member stood up and said, “I don’t believe that we ought to have an American flag on display in our Worship Center. The reason why is that our faith is not an American faith; it’s a worldwide faith. And when people see the flag here, they may think that we have somehow Americanized Christianity. I move that the flag be taken out of our Worship Center.” Well, there was an issue now. He’d brought it up. It had to be dealt with, and they didn’t want to take the American flag out, because of what that might say. And somebody else said, “Well, let’s put the Christian flag up. Put the American flag on one side, and put the Christian flag on the other side.” And they discussed that for a while, but the offerer of the motion said, “Oh, no. If you put the Christian flag over here and the American flag over here, then that says that Christianity and Americanism are equal.” “Oh,” they said.

“Well,” somebody said, “I have an idea. Let’s put the American flag and the Christian flag up, but let’s make the Christian flag higher than the American flag.” They kicked that around, and somebody said, “No, you can’t do that, because it is not right to fly any other flag higher than the American flag.” “Hmm,” they said. Somebody said, “I know what to do: Let’s put them where they look like they’re on the same level, but let’s put a piece of paper under the Christian flag.”

Hey, folks, this church history literally went on. They had a big debate about that, and some people left the church over that kind of business. God deliver me. Say amen. God deliver you. You see, there are people who can take something like this and just work it over until it causes division.

People get divided about church music. Oh, man. You know, listen. There are people who think if you have any kind of contemporary music, it’s of the devil—and especially if it has a beat to it. There are other people who think if you have music that is traditional, and glorious, and from yesteryear, the church has grown cold, and dead, and formal, and we have forsaken God, and we’re not with it. Listen, folks. In this congregation, this morning, we have people who have all kinds of tastes about music.

One thing about music I would say: Wherever it is, it ought to fit the occasion.

I found a verse—Proverbs 25:20: *“He that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.”* Now what that means is, if somebody is in suffering and pain, there are certain kinds of songs that’ll rub him the wrong way. There are different ways to praise God, and at Bellevue, of course, there’s music that would be unfitting—but don’t become an extremist about anything.

There are people who are extremists about worship. There are some people who think if you’re not constantly lifting your hands to Heaven—you’re not constantly jumping around, you know, waving your hands, or something like this—that you just don’t love God. And there are other people who think, if you lift a hand to Heaven, you are some kind of fanatic. One man said, “Mister, if you lift your hand in this church, it had better be a good question.” Hey, folks, listen. The Bible mentions *“lifting up holy hands”* (1 Timothy 2:8) to God in prayer, but the Bible also says that everything is to *“be done decently and in order”* (1 Corinthians 14:40). And if you’re a person that’s drawing attention to yourself rather than pointing attention to Jesus, you don’t know the meaning of worship. But friend, we’re to worship and let people worship, as they want to worship. And don’t get divided over worship. Dr. Vance Havner said, “We don’t need to freeze in formalism or fry in fanaticism.” No, we’re here to worship the Lord. There are those who think that, if we worship one way or the other way, that, somehow, we’ve quenched the Spirit. The devil loves to get us divided over these things. See, it is foolish. It is fractious.

### **C. Extremism Is Fruitless**

Now not only is it foolish and fractious; it is fruitless. Look, if you will, in verse 9: *“But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable”* (Titus 3:9)—*“unprofitable.”* That is, they’re fruitless; they don’t get you anywhere.

Let me tell you some ways that you can get yourself into some sort of an unprofitable exercise just by becoming a fanatic.

#### **1. In Your Quiet Time**

For example, in the matter of your quiet time. Everybody ought to have a quiet time—I believe that. But you know, you can become legalistic over your quiet time and somehow feel that you’ve grieved the Spirit of God, if you fail to have this exact, precise, special time. Did you know, sometimes, you know what you need more than a quiet time is a nap? Seriously. Jesus went to sleep in the back of a boat during a storm, because He was just worn out. Was He sinning by doing that? Of course not. He never sinned.

*When I was a young preacher, I used to think I had to have a big S painted on my*

chest —“Super Preacher.” And people sometimes would call in the middle of the night, or early in the morning. I’d say, “Hello”—be sound asleep—“Hello,” like I’d been up all night reading the Book of Lamentations.

Listen. Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is to rest. The Bible never lays down any rules for quiet time. You ought to have a quiet time. But I’m telling you, there are people who’ll get you under bondage about these things.

## 2. In Your Bible Study

You can be an extremist about Bible study. You ought to read the Bible, but it’s a sin to be reading the Bible, when you ought to be praying. And it’s a sin to be praying or reading the Bible, if you ought to be playing with your grandkids. Does that offend you? Listen. *There is enough time in every day to do everything graciously that God wants you to do.* You need to read wider than the Bible. Obviously, you ought to read the Bible. But a Christian needs to be informed.

## 3. In the Matter of Separation

There are extremists in every area of life. Your Bible study can become a burden, rather than a blessing, by extremism. You can be extreme over the matter of separation. We’re to be separate from sinners. Jesus was. But listen. His separation was not isolation. Let me give you some verses here. Matthew 9:9–13: *“And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew...”*—now, who was Matthew? Well, let me tell who Matthew was: Matthew was a tax collector. Do you think the IRS is bad? Friend, if you lived in that day, you’d beg for the IRS today. He was a tax collector, worked for Rome—*“as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom:”*—that is, he was taking in the money—*“and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house,”*—that is, the house of Matthew—*“behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him”*—now, these are people, the offscouring; they sat down with Him—*“and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”*

Now what if Jesus, in His body, were to visit Memphis? I mean, just come down, step out of Heaven, literally; and, we’d say, “Well, I wonder where He’s going to show up? I wonder if He’s going to show up at Bellevue? Maybe He’s going to be at one of those other churches. Where will He be—at the Coliseum, so everybody can go?” And suppose you went and found Jesus sitting on a street corner, eating pizza with pimps and drug addicts. There He is. You’d say, “Well, He didn’t come to Bellevue. He’s down

there on the street corner eating a pizza with pimps. I'm a little disappointed in Jesus." You would have been just like the Pharisees—just like the Pharisees. "What is this? This man eats with sinners." Yes, He's a friend of sinners. Thank God He is. And we ought to be.

You see—yes, separation, that's right; but, not isolation. You ask some non-believers what they think about Christians. They'll tell you they're legalistic; they're self-righteous, back stabbers. We can be extreme about many things.

#### **4. In Your Service for the Lord**

You can be extreme even about your service for the Lord. I said that love causes you to serve the Lord; but, you can get so extreme that you run yourself into the ground, and maybe harm your family, harm your health. You know what a fanatic is? A fanatic is somebody—when he loses his direction, he doubles his speed. That's what a fanatic is. And Paul says, "Look, Timothy. Be zealous of good works—a burning, blazing, passionate, emotional zeal for Jesus. But avoid ungodly extremism."

#### **5. In the Matter of Self-Denial**

You can be an extremist in the matter of self-denial. You're to deny yourself. But while the Bible teaches self-denial, the Bible is not against you having a good time. There are some so-called Christians that remind me of the Grinch. Remember the Grinch, where you read Dr. Seuss? The old Grinch—anytime he saw anybody having a good time, he bit himself. There are people like that. God wants you to enjoy life. You say, "Are you sure?" Yes, the Bible says, "God giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17). Ecclesiastes 5:18: "*Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion.*"

Now sure, there's sacrifice. Sure, that we're to endure hardness. Sure, the Church is a battleship, not a showboat. But there is the joy of the Lord. Jesus had the "*oil of gladness*" (Hebrews 1:9). Let me tell you something about Jesus: Jesus was not some cold, pale, religious, sanctimonious recluse that had ice water for blood. Little children came to sit in His lap. In that passage that I read to you about the publicans and the sinners, they came to eat with the Lord Jesus Christ, because they saw in Him an openness and a gladness.

#### **D. Extremism Is Fatal**

Now what have I said about this extremism? I said, it is foolish; it is fractious; it is fruitless. I'll tell you something else: It is fatal—it is fatal. Notice—continue on in verse 10: "*A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself*" (Titus 3:10–11). You miss the grace of God with extremism, and that is fatal. Many are lost because of

misguided zeal. Not only of their own—their own lost-ness—but others are lost because of fanaticism. I believe that the cause of Christ has been hurt more in the house of God than it has in the house of its enemies, many times.

An interesting story: Jesus was traveling, and the Samaritans would not receive Him. Now James and John were followers of the Lord Jesus, and they were incensed because of the Samaritans who lived north of Judea. And read in Luke 9:54–56: *“And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.”* Now they wouldn’t receive Him in Samaria, so, James and John said, “Lord, look at these people—they haven’t received You. Lord, I’ll tell you what let’s do: Let’s *nuke* ’em. Let’s call down fire from Heaven. Let ’em fry. They deserve it.” Jesus said, “You don’t know what spirit you’re of. I didn’t come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”

This is the same spirit of those who’ll go into an abortion clinic and shoot a doctor or a nurse in the name of Jesus. And the whole abortion matter is set back, not set forward. People don’t understand what spirit they are of. It’s a fanaticism that is fatal. God had a plan for Samaria, all right, but it was a different kind of fire. It was Holy Ghost fire. And it was a revival that came to Samaria. Misguided zeal is so terrible.

Let me give you another example of what I’m talking about: When Simon Peter, in the Garden of Gethsemane, tried to defend Jesus—that’s one of the chief segments of the *Passion Play*. Do you remember—they’re coming down this way, coming across, and they have their torches, and they have their staves, and they have their swords? And over here is old Simon Peter. You remember the story in the *Passion Play*—even if you haven’t read the Bible? Old Peter pulls out his sword, and he runs over there, and, he cuts the ear off of Malchus, the servant to the high priest. Jesus has to put it back on him and heal him. Do you remember that, in the *Passion Play*? Remember seeing that? What was that? Friend, that was misguided zeal. That was extremism. That did not help the cause of Christ; it set it back. Let me tell you what was wrong with it:

### **1. The Wrong Enemy**

Number one: He had the wrong enemy. Malchus was not the enemy. They were not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers (Ephesians 6:12). Malchus was a servant of the high priest. He himself was a slave. And many of those people that we attack, themselves, are slaves of Satan—did you know that? And it can be a financial sword; it can be an emotional sword; it can be a physical sword—but he had the wrong enemy.

## 2. The Wrong Weapon

I'll tell you something else: Not only did he have the wrong enemy; he had the wrong weapon—a sword. The Bible says, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal; they're mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4). Later on, Peter used another sword, the Sword of the Spirit, on the Day of Pentecost, and 3,000 were not slain; they were made alive by trusting Jesus as their personal Savior.

## 3. The Wrong Energy

I'll tell you what else he had: He had the wrong energy. Peter has been down there sleeping. Jesus had said, “Peter, watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation” (Mark 14:38). All of a sudden, he wakes up, pulls a sword out, and is going out to do something for God. The wrong energy—the energy of the flesh rather than of the Spirit. Every extremist, every fanatic, rather than walking in the Spirit, is obeying the energy of the flesh.

## 4. The Wrong Attitude

The wrong enemy, the wrong weapon, the wrong energy. And I'll tell you what: He had the wrong attitude. He was hopping mad; he was angry. And the Bible says, “The wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God” (James 1:20). How did Peter get in this mess? I'll tell you one thing: He was arguing when he should have been listening. He was trying to keep Jesus from the cross, when Jesus was trying to explain to him. I'll tell you something else: He was sleeping, when he should have been praying. Now I've told you there's a time to sleep, but there is also a time to pray. There is this wonderful balance in the Christian life. And now Peter is a misguided, religious extremist who is setting back the cause of Christ. I'm so glad that Jesus put the ear back on Malchus. Can you imagine what he'd look like with one ear? “Hey, Malc, what happened to your ear?” “One of the followers of Jesus whacked it off.” A great testimony—huh?—a great testimony.

## Conclusion

What I'm trying to say is this: Thank God for zeal. We're to be zealous of good works. Never lose your passion. Never lose your fire. Never lose your joy—never, never, never. But don't let the devil make you an extremist. Don't let the devil make you a fanatic. Don't let the devil just get you like some folks who were so hyped up about the way they worship. Somebody said, “You think those folks are going to Heaven?” He said, “Well, yes, if they don't run right past it.” There is a sweet reasonableness to serving our Lord.

Now our time is gone. But what is the grace of God? You're in chapter 3. Look at the first part of chapter 3. Read the first three verses: *“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil on no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.”* Why? Listen, folks. This is the way we were one time: *“For we ourselves also were*

*sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us*” (Titus 3:1–5). He says, “Look, be loving; be kind. You were just like them, at one time. And let the beauty, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, be seen in you.”

Well, I really felt the Lord wanted me to say that today. I don’t know why—except maybe about someone here today who may have needed it. Oh, yeah. Let me tell you something, friend: The grace of God is so wonderful—so wonderful! “The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11)—isn’t grace a beautiful word? I think the two most beautiful words in the whole English language are these: *Jesus* and *grace*. I love those words. I love the name *Jesus*. It fits just right on my tongue—and the word *grace*. That’s what makes God love people like we are—like us. We’re not a bunch of self-righteous people who are better than somebody else. *A church is a society of sinners who finally realized it, and banded themselves together to do something about it.* So thank God for His wonderful, wonderful grace.

And I want to tell you something—some good news: God loves you, and He wants to save you. And He will save you, because it is His grace that brings salvation. And Paul told Titus, “Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy that He saved us” (Titus 3:5). And He’ll save you. He’ll save you today, and He’ll keep you forever.

Would you bow your heads in prayer. While heads are bowed and eyes are closed, may I lead you in a prayer. And in this prayer, you can receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord. You’re not saved by repeating words. My prayer is only a guide, and it will do no good at all unless you mean it from your heart. But if you want to be saved, would you pray this kind of a prayer—just from your heart, right now. Forget anyone else is here. Just address yourself to the God who loves you so much, and pray like this: “Dear God, I know that You love me, and I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me, and You promised to save me, if I would trust You. I do trust You, Jesus. I believe You’re the Son of God. I believe You paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I now, by faith, receive You into my heart as my Lord and Savior. I trust You to save me. I yield my heart, my life, to You. You are now my Lord, my God, my Savior, and my Friend. Thank You for saving me.”

You say, “Pastor Rogers, could it be that easy?” Yes, because Jesus died for you. That’s grace. That is grace. Receive it. “Thank You for saving me. Now Lord Jesus, because You died for me, I will for You—not in order to be saved, but because I’m saved. And I will not be ashamed of You. I will make it public, if You’ll only give me the strength. In Your name I pray. Amen.”

# The Dangers of Extremism

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** February 20, 1994

**Main Scripture Text:** Titus 2:14–15

*“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”*

TITUS 2:14

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## Introduction

Take God’s Word and go back to the Book of Titus, where we began this series of messages on grace, and find Titus chapter 2. And in a moment I’m going to begin reading, in verse 14. Now grace is a wonderful, wonderful attribute of God, and we’re saved by the grace of God. And the grace of God affirms something, and the grace of God tells us to avoid something, and the grace of God achieves something. And that’s what we’re going to see today, as we deal with this message on “The Dangers of Extremism.”

Last week, we dealt with perfectionism. Today, with extremism. And both perfectionism and extremism are the enemies of grace. I’ve been in the ministry long

enough to know that the cause of Christ has been deeply hurt by extremists, with their misguided zeal. These are the people who need to understand more and more about the grace of our Lord.

Now look, if you will, please, in verse 14. I'm going to just jump right in to the middle of a sentence. It's speaking of Jesus, and this is what it says: "*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works...*"—underscore the word *zealous*—"zealous of good works. *These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee*" (Titus 2:14–15). Now what Paul says to Titus is, "Affirm this. This is what grace affirms."

## I. Grace Affirms Zeal

And what does grace affirm? That we are to be zealous of good works. Do you know what we need in the churches in America today is zeal—a burning, passionate, emotional zeal for the Lord Jesus. Our Lord had rather have you out-and-out against Him than to have you lukewarm, pretending to be for Him. The middle of the road is a bad place to drive; it's a bad place to live. We ought to be all out, out-and-out, 100% for the Lord Jesus Christ. And in our lives, we ought to be zealous for the Word of God, and for truth.

There are certain things that are non-negotiable. There are certain hills that are big enough to die on. There are certain things that we ought to be willing to let bring division. *It's better to be divided by truth than to be united in error.* Would you not agree? And Jesus didn't come to just make all of us jettison truth in order to get along. He said, in Matthew chapter 10 verse 34: "*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword*" (Matthew 10:34). One of the most divisive things that have come along is truth.

And Martin Luther, who began the Protestant Reformation, said, and I quote, "I do not want to know anything of peace and concord, when the Word of God is thereby lost." He was that man, when they put him on trial, and asked him to recant, who said, "Here I stand. God help me, I can do no other."

And so we're not to be moderate about some things. If a man's house is on fire, and his children are perishing in the flames, you ought not to be moderate about the rescue. If your wife is being attacked by some man who wants to assault her, you ought not to be moderate in your defense. If she asked you, "Do you love me?" don't say, "I love you moderately." You'll be in bad trouble, if you do. And we're not to love the Lord Jesus moderately. We need to be zealous. The very word *zealous* means, "to be on fire." It means, "to be aflame with the love of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now I want to leave that point, because the middle point is the big one. But I just simply want to say, there is something that grace affirms, and it is zeal. Grace affirms

zeal. Because, when I'm finished with the message, you might think, if you don't listen very carefully, that I'm opposed to zealous living, that I'm asking us just to be half-hearted and lackadaisical about our service to Jesus. If you hear that, you have misheard the message.

## II. Grace Avoids Extremism

Now what does grace affirm? Zeal. What does grace avoid? Extremism. Go to the next chapter now, and look, if you will, in chapter 3, verse 9: *"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject"* (Titus 3:9). There is a zeal that is divisive, destructive, and deadly. It can divide homes. It can divide churches. It can divide communities.

What is this misguided zeal? Well, it is to find an error, and try to perpetuate it, or to find a principle, and overdo it—even if it is a good principle. Principles are like tools. Now you can take a hammer, and build a house with it, or you can beat somebody to death with it. Anything taken to an extreme can become a bad thing, if taken to an extreme. And we're going to illustrate that here in a moment. And we need to learn the difference between zeal and moderation. Paul said in Philippians, *"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand"* (Philippians 4:5). That doesn't mean, "Let your lukewarmness be known unto all men." *"Let your moderation"*—your sweet reasonableness—*"be known unto all men."*

This Friday night, I took Joyce for her Valentine dinner. We kind of got out of sync, because of the weather, and some other things, and so I took her out, and took her to a steak house. Now she doesn't let me eat a lot of steak. And she says, "You know, you don't need too much red meat." But you have to admit: a steak is good. And we went to a good steak house, and they had the menu, and there were all of these fine steaks there. And I looked at one, and it said, "A petite filet mignon." Filet mignon—that's zeal. Petite—that's moderation. And so with all of the zeal that I could muster, I said, "I want the filet mignon...the petite one."

See, zeal and moderation go together, properly understood. And zeal and moderation are not enemies; they're friends. But extremism—extremism—is the enemy of both zeal and moderation. And what Paul is talking about here is extremism. It's taking a principle, and distorting it—running it into the ground.

I was in Madrid—the city of Madrid—one day, walking down the street, and I came to City Square, and they were getting ready for a concert. And they had built an incredible concert stage, and they had sound speakers there, and they were tweaking, and tuning those things. And folks, you have never heard the volume of sound that could come out of those speakers that I was hearing. Now it was meant to convey a

message of music, but they were tuning that thing in Madrid, and the people in Antarctica were putting their fingers in their ears. Now amplification is good; but amplification overdone is what? It is distortion, and it is pain.

Extremism—extremism—is the enemy of the gospel of the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And it is a part of our fallen nature to want to be extreme. And what it is, it is very counterproductive.

For example, in chapter 2, he tells us to be zealous; but now, look, in chapter 3, verse 1. He says to Titus, to tell these saints: *“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,”*—that is, “Teach them to be good citizens: to honor the king, to honor the government.” And then look—*“to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.”* Very frankly, some of our Christian causes are lost because of the extremism of people who stand for those causes. We hurt our cause by extremism. I’m not saying compromise. I’m talking about extremism. Now we come at these folks like they are the enemy. But notice what Paul says: *“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another”* (Titus 3:1–3).

You say, “Pastor Rogers, they are a bunch of ungodly sinners.” Paul said, “That’s right. And so were you, before the grace of God found you.” You say, “Well, they’re living like sin.” Of course they are; that’s what sinners do. They’re sinners. What do you expect of them? Paul says, “There are people who need to see the grace of God in our lives.” Now that doesn’t mean that we compromise at all. But we need to learn to live by grace. The cause of Christ—the cause of Christ—has been hurt by misguided zeal.

Let me give you two or three example taken right out of the Bible. Jesus was in Samaria. The Samaritans were mistreating the Lord Jesus Christ. James and John were with Jesus, and they became very zealous for Jesus. And here’s what they said—put this in your margin—Luke 9, verse 54, and following: *“And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.”* Now what manner of spirit they were of was the manner of spirit of a misguided zealot. They saw the way the Samaritans were living, and they said, “Lord, let’s nuke ’em. Lord, let’s get a little *heavenly napalm*. Fry ’em, Lord. Fry ’em.” The Lord said, “Hey, you don’t know what manner of spirit you are of.” And then, he said, in verse 56: *“For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them”* (Luke 9:54–56).

I think of that misguided zealot who shot that abortion doctor. You remember that? Standing up for the unborn, he killed a man. In the name of life, he killed a man. And as far as I’m concerned, set the cause of *pro-life* backward. Jesus said, “You don’t know

what manner of spirit you're of." *The cause of Christ has sometimes been hurt far more in the house of its friends than in the house of its enemies.*

All right, I'll give you another classic example: Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane praying. He's already told Simon Peter, "Simon Peter, I'm going to the cross." Simon Peter said, "No, Lord. Be it far from you, Lord." Jesus had to say, "Get behind me, Satan. You're an offense to me. You're acting like the devil" (Matthew 16:21–23). And then, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the garden of Gethsemane. And Jesus said, "Now you watch and pray with me, and for me." And Jesus begins to pray, and intercede in the Garden of Gethsemane, and then that troops come in to take Jesus. Those soldiers, the servants of the High Priest, Peter awakes out of his sleep. He's sleeping when he should have been praying. He sees what is happening, and he pulls out his sword, and do you remember this? John tells us about it. I think John 18. He pulls out his sword, and he goes for the servant of the high priest. And he takes a swing at him, and cuts off that man's ear. Now Peter didn't mean to do that. He meant to cut off his head. And I mean, what does a fisherman know about sword fighting, anyway? And so he takes a whack at him, and cuts off his ear. Jesus rebuked Peter, put the ear back on Malchus, and healed him supernaturally and miraculously.

Now you talk about zeal; you talk about a man with zeal. Peter—full of zeal, full of misguided zeal: *"I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death"* (Luke 22:33). Oh boy, what a zealot, and what a flop. What was wrong with Peter?

### **1. Peter Had the Wrong Enemy**

Well, number one, he had the wrong enemy. Malchus was a servant of the High Priest. He was a slave. And a lot of times we're fighting those who are slaves of Satan. Did you know that? The Bible says, *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"* (Ephesians 6:12). We have the wrong enemy.

### **2. Peter Used the Wrong Weapon**

And then, number two, he used the wrong weapon: a sword. The Bible says, *"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God"* (2 Corinthians 10:4). Peter, using that sword, made a miserable mess. Later on, on the day of Pentecost, filled with the Holy Spirit, when he used the two-edged sword of God's Word, quick and powerful, 3,000 were not killed—they were made alive—with the Sword of the Spirit. He used the wrong weapon.

### **3. Peter Used the Wrong Strength**

He used the wrong strength. He was in the flesh. He was sleeping when he should have been praying. And waking up with the flesh, with zeal—carnal, fleshly zeal—he messed things up. And he had the wrong attitude. He was mad—he was mad. And the Bible

says, “*For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*” (James 1:20).

I’m so glad Jesus healed that man. I mean, can you image this guy going around without one ear, and somebody says, “What happened to your ear?” He says, “A hot-headed Christian cut it off.” I mean, what kind of testimony is that for the Lord Jesus Christ? “*For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*”

It’s not that we’re to be zealous. We’re to be zealous of good works. But this extremism that has come into the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ does us more damage than it does good. Somebody has described a zealot, a fanatic, as someone who, having lost sight of his goal, doubles his speed. Do you know any people like that?

## A. **What God Says About Zealots**

Now notice what God says about these people. Look again, in verse 9—four things.

### **1. Foolish questions**

“*But avoid foolish questions*” (Titus 3:9)—foolish questions. That means, things that are light, vapid, that are the difference between *twiddle dee dee* and *twiddle dee dum*.

The former pastor of this church, Dr. Lee, told me a story one time I’ll never forget. He said, “It was one of those Sundays where I preached, and gave the invitation, and the Spirit of God came in like a flood. People were being saved. They were coming down every aisle to give their heart to Christ, and the aisles were choked with people, and tears were choking those people.” Dr. Lee said a lady came down the aisle, and took him by the hand, and looked into his face. He thought she wanted to be saved. She said, “Dr. Lee, I want to ask you a question. Did you know that there were people on Earth before Adam and Eve?” Now this is during the invitation, when people are being saved. “Did you know that there were people on Earth before Adam and Eve?” You know what he said to her? He said, “No ma’am, I didn’t know it. And you don’t know it. And the angels in Heaven don’t know it. And nobody knows it. And go back to your seat.” He should have been indignant. A foolish question.

### **2. Profitless**

But not only are these things foolish, but—I want you to look at them—he says they are profitless. Look, if you will again, in verse 9—he says, “*Strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain*” (Titus 3:9)—they don’t amount to anything. There are people who will get into a narrow band, some crusade about something; and, when all of the dust is settled, and all of the smoke is cleared, so what? I frequently have people come to me with Bible questions about some esoteric thing. These people can take a theological hair and split it in nine equal sections. And yet, they’re not growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And they get on their little hobby, and they want to stay on that little hobby. It is foolish. It is profitless.

### 3. Fruitless

It is fruitless. Look, if you will again, in verse 9—he says this: *“They are unprofitable and vain”* (Titus 3:9). What does he mean by that? He means it doesn’t produce any fruit. You know who some of the greatest extremists were in the Bible? They were the Pharisees—the Pharisees. Jesus said of the Pharisees, in Matthew chapter 23 and verse 15: *“Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte”* (Matthew 23:15). I mean, they were zealous to make converts. They had their little laws, they’re little peccadilloes, they’re little idiosyncrasies. They had taken the Ten Commandments and made 613 laws out of them. And Jesus said, “Once they did it, once they made a convert a proselyte, he was *“twofold more the child of hell”* (Matthew 23:15)—twofold the child of Hell. He said, in Matthew 23:23: Oh, they *“pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin”*. What does He mean by that? They had a little mint plant in their back yard. They took nine leaves for themselves, and gave the tenth leaf to God—very extreme. But he said, *“...have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith”* (Matthew 23:23).

Do you know how Jesus described these extremists? He said, “They gag at gnats and swallow camels” (Matthew 23:24). Have you ever known anybody like that? Man, deliver me from the gnat-gaggers. There’s one thing: stoned to death with stones; but boy, it’s hard to be stoned to death with popcorn. I mean, people who take some small idiosyncrasy, and to them, that’s their whole world.

### 4. Divisive

Now what our Lord says about these things is that they’re foolish. What our Lord says about them is that they are profitless. What our Lord says about them is that they are fruitless. What our Lord says about them is, they are divisive. Look, if you will, in the next verse: *“A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject”* (Titus 3:10)—just reject him. Don’t let these people rain on the grace parade. Just don’t let them do it. It’s their problem, and you can’t make yourself sick in order to try and make them well. The word, *heretic* means, “a divider; one that brings division.” That’s what the word *heresy* literally means. They’re self-willed people. They want to bicker. They want to judge. They want to criticize. And I say, friend, it does bring division.

It’s amazing what can happen. I almost hesitate to bring this illustration up, because I may be asking for trouble myself. But in a particular church—true story—here was a man who stood up in a business meeting, and said, “We have, in our church, an American flag on the platform. I move that we take the American flag off the platform.” “Why?” “Because it would tend, in the eyes of many, to equate Christianity with America, and God as an American. So this is the house of God. We don’t need a flag here. God is greater than America.” They thought, well, maybe, to please this brother, they would take the flag down. Then, somebody said, “If we take the flag down, what

will that say? Will that say that we are un-American, that we don't love our country, that we are unpatriotic?"

They discussed that for a while. Then somebody said, "I have an idea. Why don't we put up a Christian flag also? So we'll have the American flag, and a Christian flag." And everybody said, "That's a good idea." And they breathed a sigh of relief, until someone said, "Now wait a minute. If we have a Christian flag and an American flag, that will be saying that we think that America and Christ are coexistent and coequal. We can't do that." They debated that for a long time. Then, somebody said, "Well, I have an idea. Let's have both the Christian flag and the American flag, but let's put the Christian flag higher. And then, after a while, after they debated that, somebody said, "It is illegal to fly any other flag higher than the American flag. That's not the way to display an American flag." And so they debated that for a while. And then, somebody said, "Well, let's just put a piece of paper under the American flag."

Do you see the foolishness? Do you see all of this debate about the difference between *twiddle dee dee* and *twiddle dee dum*? But as sure as I'm standing here, somebody will write me a letter, and tell me, "Pastor, you were wrong about using that illustration." And they'll tell me exactly how it ought to be done. And I'll guarantee—listen, folks—you, if you haven't been a preacher, you don't know some of the mail you'll get. It's incredible what stirs people, what excites people, what moves people; and, so much of it is extremism.

## B. **Extremism Distorts**

Now extremism can do you damage—taking a good thing, distorting it. Let me give you some examples.

### 1. **Quiet Time**

A quiet time—you ought to have a quiet time. I try to have a quiet time. But you know, you can be a slave to a quiet time. Thinking that, if you don't have your quiet time, somehow you're under a burden—guilt. "I missed my quiet time. The day is going to cave in on me." Well, the truth of the matter is, if you read the Bible, it doesn't give you any instruction about a quiet time—when to have it, or how to have it. There are some general principles, but there are no laws about a quiet time.

You know, when I was a younger preacher, I used be under such a burden about even needing to sleep. I mean, I didn't want anybody to know I slept. You know, Jesus slept in the back of a ship during a storm, but I had to be a little more holy than that. Somebody would call me at five in the morning, pick up the phone—"Hello?" I wanted them to think I had been up all night reading Lamentations, you know? We get under a burden about these things.

One great Christian said, "I have so much to do today I simply must go to bed."

Jesus said to his disciples, “Come ye...*apart...and rest a while*” (Mark 6:31). If you think I’m talking against a quiet time, you’re not hearing what I’m saying. I am talking against getting under some legalistic burden. You can do the same about Bible study. You ought to read the Bible. You ought to love the Bible, but you can get under such a burden about studying the Bible that you make a fetish out of Bible study. It becomes a legalistic thing. You think, if you can read so many chapters, you have somehow done your duty. And a chapter a day keeps the devil away. And you don’t read anything else.

The Apostle Paul read other things. You’d better believe he did. You read what he wrote, and you’ll find out that he read other things. And when he was in prison, he said, “Bring me the parchments, bring me the scroll, bring me the books; I want to read, I want to study” (2 Timothy 4:13), because he wanted to be a well-rounded individual. Read the Bible, study the Bible; but don’t become a fanatic, in the wrong sense of the word.

## 2. Secondary Separation

Separation is a godly thing—that we are to be separate. Jesus was holy, undefiled, separate from sin, but not separate from sinners. You know, there is in Bible-believing churches today a thing called *secondary separation* and *tertiary separation*. What does that mean? Well, they say this: that we are not to have fellowship with unbelievers, we’re not to have fellowship with compromisers, and we’re to come out from among them, and be ye separate (2 Corinthians 6:17).

So here’s the way they would do it: Now let’s take Brother Bill over here. Look at Brother Bill, now. This is Bill—the guy, the military man with that extreme tie on there. Is that not an extreme tie? I mean, that’s exactly what I’m talking about—extremism. Look at that tie. All right now, here’s Brother Bill sitting over here. Now let’s say that Bill is a good and a godly man, really loves God. But now, let’s suppose that Bob is a compromiser. He looks like a compromiser, doesn’t he? All right now, here’s Brother Bob over here; he’s a compromiser. He loves God, he believes just right, but maybe Bob just doesn’t exactly hold the faith exactly like I hold the faith, and like Brother Dale holds the faith.

So now, I love Brother Bill, and Brother Bill sits near Brother Bob, and they fellowship. There are some who would tell me, “You can’t have fellowship with Bill.” Why? Because he fellowships with Bob. Do you see that? Do you see that? That’s secondary separation. And then, there are some who would say, “Well, maybe Bill and Bob are both all right, but Bob fellowships with Jim.” Now you can tell he’s rotten to the core. I mean, just look at him. All right now, what happens here is both of these guys may be all right; but, if Bob fellowships with him, you fellowship with whom? Bill fellowships with Bob; then, I can’t fellowship with either of those guys.

You say, “Do people actually believe that?” Yeah. You’d be surprised. The

evangelical world is divided by that kind of reasoning and that kind of logic. That is extremism. As a matter of fact, they crucified Jesus for the same thing. Jesus was a friend of sinners. Not exactly the same thing, because these were out-and-out lost people; but the principle was there. They crucified Jesus because He was a friend of sinners—those extremists, those Pharisees. Jesus ate in the house of Matthew, a tax collector. You say, “Was that bad?” It’d be like you going past a pizza parlor, and seeing Jesus eating pizza with a pimp and a dope pusher. Why? They criticized Him, and He said, “Listen. It’s not the whole that need a physician, but they that are sick.” Biblical separation, yes. But Biblical separation is not isolation. It is not dividing and torturing the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Extremism—it comes in many, many forms. You know, you get so separated there’s nobody left standing. Two Quakers were talking. One of them said to the other one, “You know, everybody is a little strange but me and thee. And I’m not too sure about thee.”

### **3. Submission**

Well, take the principle of submission. Should a wife be submissive to her husband? Yes, but that’s not subjugation. What if your husband tells you to do something that’s wrong? Should you do it? No, don’t do it. There’s a higher authority than your husband. As a matter of fact, there are men who have used the principle of submission, rather than as a hammer to build their house, they use it as a weapon to club their wife.

Did you know that Jesus is the head of the Church, but He has never forced me to do anything? He has never forced me to do one thing. He leads by love. I believe that children ought to be submissive to their parents. But some of you parents are so overzealous in this matter of making children comply that what you’re going to do is to raise rebels, because you have not learned the grace of God in the home. I’m not saying that there’s not a principle of submission. If you hear me say that there’s not a principle of children obeying their parents, you’ve missed it altogether. But I’m saying that we need to put the sweet grace of God in what we do and how we live.

I think it’s a matter of how many children you ought to have—family planning. There are people telling folks today, “You ought to have as many children as you biologically can.” And some people have been put under a tremendous burden about that. Now the Bible does say we’re to replenish the earth (Genesis 1:28), but you’re not to do it all by yourself. I believe in a big family. Jim, you’ve got a big family. We’ve got a big family. Big families have more fun. I came from a large family. Joyce and I have five children; got a little boy in Heaven—four here. But there are always people who are going around pushing a principle to an extreme, and putting people under bondage.

### **4. Music**

In the matter of music. Boy, you talk about trying the extremists. In the matter of music,

you can get extremists. We've got them in this church, and every church. There are some people who love Southern Gospel. If we were to announce tonight we were going to have a Southern Gospel quartet, or something, there'd be people come out of the woodwork that don't normally come. They'll be sitting out here, you know, just ready for Southern Gospel. Other people can't stand it. They think it's beneath the gospel of Jesus Christ. Other people love anthems. And an anthem is fine.

Do you know the difference between a normal song and an anthem? Well, a normal song you could say, "The cow got in the corn." An anthem you say, "The cow, the cow, the cow; the corn, the corn, the corn; the cow, the corn; the cow, the corn; the cow got in the corn."

You know, anthems are fine. Somebody says, "That's music." And somebody else likes something else. And they take a principle, and they go to an extreme. There's a well-known Bible teacher who will teach that, if music has any rhythm, any beat to it, it's of the devil. It's of the devil. Believe that. Contemporary music is out. Well, all music was contemporary music at one time. I mean, everything's got to start somewhere. What are we doing? We are trying, sometimes, to move people back a couple of centuries. No, listen, friend. There is a sweet reasonableness. And if you think you can please everybody in a church like this—a small one, or a big one—you are w-r-o-n-g, wrong. Isn't that right? You can't do it.

You know, something will happen, and somebody will see one of the people applaud. Somebody will say, "Hey, this is not a theater, this is a church." Well, others say, "The Bible says, 'Clap your hands, all ye people' (Psalm 47:1). I'm praising the Lord. I am excited." Who's right and who's wrong? Somebody wants to lift their hands in worship—look at them. I'm not sure about that. Well, the Bible speaks of lifting holy hands to God. They say, "Well, just lift one hand." Kind of like this.

I mean, it's amazing how we want to take a principle, and use it as a hammer to destroy other people, and get in little arguments about little things that really don't make that much difference. I'm not talking about jettisoning great biblical principles. I'm not talking about compromising truth. But folks, I'm saying that there's something that we should affirm, and that is zeal, a burning, blazing, emotional, passionate love for Jesus Christ and his Word. And there's something we should avoid, and that is extremism.

### III. Grace Achieves Action

Now having said that, there's something that not only grace affirms, and grace avoids; there's something that grace achieves. Look at it, and we're finished. Verse 15—chapter 3, verse 15: "*All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen*" (Titus 3:15). Don't you love that? Oh, can't you see the pastor's heart here? Can't you see Paul just saying, "Look—look. It's grace. It's grace." Grace is

not an excuse to sin. Grace is not an encouragement to laziness.

Oh, serve God with all of your heart. If you're a singer, and you have a mediocre voice, the desire of your heart ought to be to make that voice sing the sweetest note it can sing to Jesus Christ. If you have a limited I.Q., every point of that I.Q. ought to be given to Him. And you ought to study to show yourself approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15). If you don't have mountains of muscles and bulging biceps, if you're not like some of these athletes we've been watching in the Olympics, still, every nerve, every fiber, every sinew, every corpuscle ought to beat for Jesus Christ. Zealous, zealous, zealous of good works.

*All to Jesus I surrender;*

*All to Him I freely give.*

—JUDSON W. VAN DEVENTER

## **Conclusion**

I'm not talking against zeal. I'm not in favor of compromise. But O friend, there are two things that are enemies of grace: one is perfectionism; the other is extremism. Don't you want our church to be a church of sweet, sweet grace? Let's make it so. We'll not always agree with everybody on everything. Let's keep the main thing the main thing.

Father, bless this message to our hearts. In Jesus' wonderful name. Amen.

# God's Amazing Grace

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached: September 9, 2001**

**Main Scripture Text: Titus 3:1–7**

*“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*

TITUS 3:7

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- A. Notice What You Were Intellectually: Foolish
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## Introduction

Well, I love words. Words are very meaningful. But, I think two of the most beautiful words in the English language are these: *Jesus* and *grace*. Would you agree? Jesus—I love the name *Jesus*; it fits just right on my tongue, in my heart, in my mouth. And, *grace* is a wonderful word. And, tonight, we're going to be talking and thinking about God's amazing grace before we partake of the Lord's Supper. Would you find the Book of Titus? It's after 1 and 2 Timothy; it's back a little bit toward the back of the New Testament. And, turn to the third chapter. We're going to read seven verses that really deal with God's amazing grace.

Now, what is grace? Grace is the unmerited love and favor of God toward undeserving sinners such as we are, and grace is absolutely, totally contrary to the wisdom of this world and the human nature. As a matter of fact, you finish these

sentences for me: There's no such thing as a...free lunch. That's right. Somebody says, "I want to buy your lunch"—look out. All right, number two: We make money the old-fashioned way; we...earn it. Nobody's gonna give you any money according to this world. God helps those who...help themselves. Lots of people think that's in the Bible, by the way. You get what you...pay for. Now, those things are just in us—that's human nature.

Grace is absolutely contrary to human nature. We think that, somehow, it's up to us. Militarism says that we're to fight our way out. Politics say that we're going to legislate our way out. Materialism says we're going to buy our way out. Industry says we're going to work our way out. Philosophy says we're going to think our way out. There's only one way out, and His name is Jesus. That's just contrary to human nature, to think any other way.

Now, let's look at this Scripture. Paul is talking to Titus, and he's left Titus at Crete; and, he says, "Titus, here's what I want you to do for the folks at Crete. Number one": *"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work"* (Titus 3:1). Did you know that, when we become Christians, we become good citizens? And, I think the scandal of our day is the bad citizenship of good people. We are citizens here, on this earth, in a way. We're not strangers—a stranger is away from home. We're not vagabonds—a vagabond has no home. We are pilgrims—citizens on our way home. And then, Paul begins to talk to Titus and tell Titus how to teach the people to live. And, what he does—he deals in three things. He deals, first of all, with our past guilt; then, he deals with God's present grace; and then, he deals with prospective glory.

## I. Our Past Guilt

Now, look, first of all, at our past guilt. He says here, in verse 2, that they're *"to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers"*—or different—*"lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another"* (Titus 3:2–3). Now, look in verse 2. He says, "Don't criticize other people; don't criticize these sinners. They're acting just like you used to, just like you used to. That's right—just like you used to." Every now and then, we want to excoriate and scold sinners for sinning. Hey folks, they're sinners—that's what they do! That is what they do. Isn't that right, John? I mean, you're out there scolding people out there, where you work, for living in sin. You might as well be scolding billy goats for butting. I mean, that is their nature, and that's what you were, before you were saved. That's our past guilt.

### A. **Notice What You Were Intellectually: Foolish**

Notice what you were intellectually. He says, “Intellectually, you were foolish” (Titus 3:3). You know, one of the most foolish things around is sin. You didn’t understand. A man without Christ is foolish. He doesn’t understand. You can take an unsaved person, put him here tonight—and there are some, perhaps, here tonight—they don’t understand us; they don’t understand what we’re talking about, for the Bible says, in 1 Corinthians 1:18: *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.”*

Remember what Jesus said when He was talking to Nicodemus? He said, “Nicodemus, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That if anybody would believe on Him, they wouldn’t perish; they’d have eternal life” (John 3:14–15). And, they were out in the wilderness. The people had sinned against God; they went to Moses. Moses went to God, and God said to Moses, “Moses, I’m going to make a way for you. Take a serpent of brass and put it on a pole; put it in the middle of the camp; and tell anyone, ‘If they can look at that in faith, they’ll live’” (Numbers 21:8). Now, that may seem very foolish, very foolish. That serpent was a symbol of sin. Brass is a symbol of judgment. This was sin under judgment, and it was a picture, in the Old Testament, of Jesus on the cross. “As the serpent of brass was lifted up, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14). It’s a picture of the cross. And, it was an Old Testament illustration of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, people were dying of snakebites, and there were poisonous, venomous, fiery serpents all over. (This was in the Book of Numbers.) And, people were dying, and there were hurried funerals, and weeping, and so forth. But then, there came a cure, there came a remedy, and there were instantaneous cures and rapturous shouts of joy. And, I can just imagine one woman going to the tent where her husband is dying, and she says to him, “Husband, I’ve got wonderful news for you: You don’t have to die. God has made a remedy.” And, he says, “Wait a minute; just hold it right there. Are you talking about the brass serpent theory?” And, she says, “Sweetheart, I’m talking about the brass serpent, but it is no theory. I’m telling you that there are people who are being radically, dramatically healed by looking at that brass serpent.” He stiffens himself up; he’s been snake-bitten; he’s dying; his pain, fever, his nerves are afire; his head is throbbing. He says, “Woman, listen to me: I have enough problems of my own right now without you bringing that foolish religion into this tent. Don’t mention it to me anymore. I don’t want to hear anymore of your superstition.” And so, he dies. It’s foolishness to him.

And, this city is full of people just like that. You go knock on their door, want to tell them about Jesus—they don’t want to hear it. They do not understand what we understand; they don’t know what we know. And, that’s the way we were before we got

saved.

**B. Notice What You Were Morally: Disobedient**

We were not only foolish intellectually, but notice what we were... We were foolish; and then, he says, “We were disobedient” (Titus 3:3). Look at that verse again: “We were also foolish, disobedient” (Titus 3:3). This word *disobedient* actually means “stubborn”; “obstinate” is what it really means. Did you know there are a lot of people who, even if they believed the gospel, would not be saved? John, you’re an evangelist. There are a lot of people who believe what you preach, but they won’t give their heart to Jesus. A man was arguing with a lawyer, or presenting Christ to a lawyer—true story—and he was showing this man everything in the Bible about the Lord Jesus Christ. This man noticed that the lawyer was very obstinate and finally said to the man, “I want to ask you a question: If you were convinced—if you were convinced that Jesus is the Son of God and died for your sins—would you give your heart to him?” He said, “No.” See, the problem is not always intellectual; the problem is moral, it is just... Paul says, “Look what we were—we were foolish; we were disobedient.”

**C. Notice What You Were Intellectually: Deceived**

And then, he goes on to say—look at it again, in verse 3: “We were deceived” (Titus 3:3). There’s a mastermind behind this. We were deceived. Satan is a liar; he’s blinded the minds of them that believe not, and that’s the reason we need to understand, to have mercy upon these people. These people are foolish; they’re disobedient; they are deceived. If you’ll put it down, there are just three D’s: They’re darkened, disobedient, and deceived. And, so were you. That’s what we were intellectually.

**D. Notice What You Were Morally: Slaves**

And, what were we morally before Jesus found us? Look at it again, in verse 3: “*serving divers lusts and pleasures*” (Titus 3:3). That is, the word *servicing* means “slaves to lust.” The unsaved man says, “Well, I’m free to do whatever I want.” He’s free to do whatever he wants, but he’s not free to do as he ought. He is a slave to his sin.

**E. Notice What You Were Socially: Hateful**

And then, notice what we are—not only intellectually and morally, but what we are socially: “*living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another*” (Titus 3:3).

Now, that’s our past guilt. That was true about every mother’s child in this place. Now, not all are the same kind of sinners—you may have been moral outwardly—but this is what sin is. You know, more people drown in nine feet of water than in ninety feet of water. It’s not the amount of sin, but it’s the fact of sin that gives our past guilt.

## II. Our Present Grace

Now, let's move on and think not only about our past guilt, but think about our present grace. Begin, now, in verse 4. I love this little connection here: *"But"*—he describes what we were—*"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"* (Titus 3:4–5). Now, this is God's present grace. This is why we're here tonight, brothers and sisters. This is why we can sing; this is why we can celebrate; this is why we can be so full of joy.

### A. The Sovereign Love of God

First of all, there's the sovereign love of God. Look in verse 4: *"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared"* (Titus 3:4). I can hardly take it in that God would love us, that the sovereign God of the universe loves us. He loves us by His sheer grace.

I read a story about an ad that was in a paper, one time; it was a lost and found ad. Some man had lost his dog, and the ad said something like this: "Lost dog, mixed breed, blind in one eye, limps due to an arthritic condition, patches of fur missing due to mange, does not hear well. Answers to the name Lucky." Well, I tell you what, we're lucky dogs ourselves, because Somebody loves us. Those people love that dog enough—mangy, crippled, blind, deaf dog. Somebody loved it.

And, God loves us, but I've told you so many times, *God doesn't love us because we're valuable; we're valuable because God loves us*. It's just in the love of God—that's what grace is.

How are you going to save yourself? You going to save yourself by subtraction, or you gonna stop doing things? You think that's gonna save you? Suppose you're a drunkard, and you stop drinking. Is that gonna save you? No, you just go to Hell sober. You're a sinner already. You gonna save yourself by addition? You gonna start doing good things? What about all the bad things you've already done? No, only the love of God, the grace of God, is what saves us. That's the reason there's not gonna be any boasters in Heaven. The Bible says, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8–9).

My favorite football player's right here, on the front row: John Bramlett. And, I don't get John this close so often, so I refer to him a lot in the sermon tonight. John, we were playing Daytona Mainland when I was in high school, and it was a rainy night—kinda like Tennessee and Arkansas last night. It was raining, and we were sloshing around on the field. We were ahead of Daytona Mainland, and I had a big tackle that was a friend.

Now, this man—really, it’s a wonder that he was able to play football, because he was so slow. As a matter of fact, when he would run, he would have to say, “Right leg, left leg, right leg, left leg”—big old Richard.

Richard intercepted a pass—most amazing thing. He didn’t really intercept it; it just came up in the air and stuck right there. He looked down and saw the ball, put one arm around it, and this arm and began to lumber toward the goal line. And, I believe, really, Jim, we blocked every man on the field three times for Richard. And, he ran the ball back; he actually scored. It was my fortune to room in the hotel with that guy that night. All night long he was talking about how he ran that ball back, and, in the most stellar performance you’ve ever heard, how he intercepted a pass and ran it back to score through that rain and through that mud. I’m just glad that we don’t have to go to Heaven to hear a bunch of braggarts—aren’t you?—bragging all through Heaven about what they did to get to Heaven. It is by the sheer grace of God. We are lucky dogs. God loves us by His grace.

## **B. The Supernatural Work of the Spirit**

And so, there’s the sovereign love of God. But then, there’s the supernatural work of the Spirit. Look again in verse 5 here: *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”* (Titus 3:5). I love that. He regenerates, and He renews.

### **1. He Regenerates Us Once and For All**

Now, He regenerates us once and for all. The Bible calls this *the washing of regeneration*. Some of our friends, who think that you have to be baptized in order to be saved, use this verse—that we wash in the baptistery, and that’s what saved us. No, it’s the washing—not of water; it is the washing of regeneration.

I’m gonna give you about four or five Scriptures here, right in a row; just put them in your margin. Zechariah 13 verse 1—God speaks of a time when the nation of Israel is going to come to faith: *“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness”* (Zechariah 13:1). He’s talking, there, about when they come to Christ as their Savior. That’s the fountain—not filled with water drawn from the city main, but a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel’s vein. Again, Revelation chapter 1, verse 5—it speaks *“unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood”* (Revelation 1:5). That’s the washing of regeneration, not baptism. You say, “Well, I’m a dyed-in-the-wool Baptist.” You better be a washed-in-the-blood Baptist. A dyed-in-the-wool Baptist can go to Hell.

Revelation 7, verse 14 speaks of those who *“have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”* (Revelation 7:14). Again, 1 Corinthians chapter 6,

verses 9 through 11: *“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators”*—that’s people living in sexual sin outside of marriage—*“nor idolaters”*—those are people that love anything else more than they love Jesus—*“nor adulterers”*—that’s sexual sin inside of marriage—*“nor effeminate”*—that’s homosexuality, a practicing homosexual—*“nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God”*—“Pastor, if I’ve done those things, does that mean I can’t go to Heaven? No, look in verse 11—*“And such were some of you: but ye are washed”* (1 Corinthians 6:9–11). That’s the washing of regeneration. You’re washed, but you’re sanctified; you’re justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

There’s a grand lady named Iris Blue, who was a prostitute; and, Iris Blue gave her heart, and she travels across this nation. I know her as a friend. She gives her testimony. One of the things I love that she says—she said, “I got down on my knees a filthy prostitute and got up a pure virgin.” You have to understand, *“such were some of you,”* not some are some of you (1 Corinthians 6:11). Friend, thank God for the precious blood of Jesus. This is the grace of God. This is the wonderful grace of God. There’s a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel’s veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

## **2. He Renews Us Day by Day**

And so, He regenerates us once for all; but now, listen, He renews us day by day. Look at the Scripture again: *“the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”* (Titus 3:5). His mercies are new every morning. I have a way in the morning—I’ve told you this before—of just waking up to God in Heaven and saying, “Lord, I thank You that You have given Yourself for me. I thank You, Lord, that this is a brand new day. I do not have to carry any baggage into today. I can be absolutely perfectly renewed today.” His mercies are new every day. He regenerates, and He renews—thank God for that.

## **C. The Sacrificial Death of the Savior**

But now, watch this: There’s the sovereign love of God; there’s the sanctifying work of the Spirit; and then, there’s the sacrificial death of the Savior. Look again in verse 6: *“Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour”* (Titus 3:6). And so, Jesus suffered, bled, and died. That’s what we’re going to do—come to the Lord’s Table tonight to remember what the Lord Jesus Christ did. By the way, folks, it’s not salvation that you need—it’s Jesus.

I mean, if I were to put five dollars in this Bible and give it to Mark; when Mark gets the Bible, he gets the five dollars. Friend, when you receive Jesus, that’s when you receive the salvation.

### III. Our Future Glory

So, it talks about our past guilt; it talks about our present grace in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and in Almighty God the Father who loves us; and then, it talks about our future glory. It's not over yet. You see, when we come to the Lord's Table, we look back to what we used to be; we remember what we are now; and then, we begin to think about what we're going to be when Jesus comes again. He says, "You do shew forth My death until I come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). So, look in verse 7: "*That being justified by his grace*"—God's amazing grace—"we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7).

Now, we have the down payment right now, but the full legacy's coming later. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. We have an inheritance. Let me tell you what Peter says about it. First Peter 1, verses 4 and 5—he says, "*[We're going] to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*" (1 Peter 1:4–5). There is an inheritance laid up. Most of us dream about some rich uncle dying somewhere and leaving us something. Well, we have an inheritance, and the Bible says, "We're heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 8:17).

When I think of this, I think of how Eleazar, who was Abraham's servant, was sent by Abraham to seek a bride for Abraham's son Isaac. It's a wonderful picture of God the Father sending the Holy Spirit to seek a bride for Jesus, and I really believe that's the picture in the Old Testament. And, the Bible says that Eleazar went off to get a bride for Isaac, and he didn't know who it was going to be; and, he prayed, and he said, "Now Lord, show me the person that You have chosen to be the bride of Isaac." And, through divine providence, Eleazar was led to Rebeka. Rebeka was a beautiful girl, and I cannot tell you the whole story—many of you know it by heart. But, he went into Rebeka's home in a faraway land and told her about Isaac. He told her how charming Isaac was, how wise Isaac was, how loving Isaac was, how rich Isaac was (and is). And then, he said, "Now, he needs a bride. Will you come with me and be his bride?" Now, you talk about a salesman—he had to convince a woman to go with a man she'd never met to meet a man she'd never seen, and she did. And, that's really what the Holy Spirit has done for me. I've never seen Jesus; neither have you, but the Holy Spirit has convinced me about how wonderful our Heavenly Isaac is.

And so, when Eleazar, who was Abraham's servant, went to seek a bride, Abraham just loaded him down with wealth. I mean, Eleazar had rubies, and diamonds, and gold, and emeralds—he had all of this wealth. It was token of Isaac's wealth. He had a little box of jewels there; and, as they were riding along, you can imagine Rebeka—how she must've felt. "Did I make a mistake? Is there really an Isaac? Is he really as wealthy as

Eleazar says that he is? Should I be leaving father, mother, houses, and land for this Isaac I've never seen?" Perhaps her chin would start to quiver and a tear would puddle up in her eye. Old Eleazar would look over there and see that; he'd just open that little box of jewels, and take out a necklace, and put it around her neck, and say, "This is from Isaac; he just wanted you to have it. You'll love Isaac," pat her hand, and they would go on.

Then, when she saw him, he was there, standing at the edge of the field, and she lighted down off the camel and ran to meet her future husband, her bridegroom. Friend, I believe that, one of these days, Jesus is gonna appear on the edge of the field; we're gonna get down off the camel and run to meet our Heavenly Isaac. But, I'm so grateful that all along the way the Lord sees, sometimes, we have those little doubts; we have those little second thoughts. And, our Lord—He's done it for me so many times—would just take some gift, and say, "This is from Jesus"—the Holy Spirit will do that—"This is just from Jesus, just a token of His love." And, all along the way there are tokens of His love.

## **Conclusion**

But, the tokens of His love are only an indication of the inheritance that will be ours, one of these days. Folks, this passage here, in Titus, speaks of our past guilt—what we were; speaks of our present grace—how God has loved us, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; and, it speaks of our future glory: One of these days, we're gonna have the full inheritance, and we're going to reign with Jesus forever and ever. And, that's what we think about, when we have the Lord's Supper.

# This Is Your Life

*By Adrian Rogers*

**Date Preached:** January 23, 1994

**Main Scripture Text:** Titus 3:3–7

*“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*

TITUS 3:7

## Outline

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## Introduction

Take God’s Word, find Titus chapter 3, and begin reading with me now, in just a moment, in verse 3—Titus 3, verse 3: *“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”* (Titus 3:3–7). We’re speaking today, one more time, on the amazing grace of God. And grace is amazing, and it is so contrary to human nature.

Help me a little bit, and finish these sentences for me: There’s no such thing as...? A free lunch. All right. We make money the old-fashioned way; we...? Earn it. God helps those who...? Help themselves. You get...? What you pay for. I mean, it’s just ingrained in us, isn’t it? I mean, grace is absolutely contrary to human nature. We want to do it ourselves.

Materialism says: “Buy your way out.” Politics say: “Legislate your way out.” Militarism says: “Fight your way out.” Industry says: “Work your way out.” Philosophy says: “Think your way out.” Deception says: “Bluff your way out.” But the grace of God is the way out. It is absolutely contrary to human nature. It is the amazing grace of God.

Now we did not read the first two verses, but in the first two verses, Paul is telling Titus—he was there, in Crete, and he was saved, twice-born in a place of once-born people—that he should live like a Christian there, and display Christian character.

This world is not our home. We’re passing through. A stranger’s away from home; a vagabond has no home; but, a pilgrim is going home. We’re pilgrims. This world is not our home. We’re on our way to Glory. But while we’re on our way, we’re to demonstrate the wonderful grace of God to all of those ’round about us. And then, after he gives those two verses, he begins to talk to us about our lives—our grace lives.

Ralph Edwards used to come on television with an approach called, “This is Your Life.” Now this is your life we’re going to be talking about, right now, if you’re saved; and, if you’re not saved, this is the life that you can have, and, I pray God, you will have. Now Paul divides our spiritual life up into three categories that are quite natural: the past, the present, and the future.

## I. Past Guilt

And I want you to see, as he talks, first of all, about our past life—what we used to be. And we’re going to call that *past guilt*. Do you have it?

Look, if you will, in verse 3. Here’s our past guilt: “*For we ourselves also were...*”—thank God for the *were*—“*For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another*” (Titus 3:3). And as he talks about our past guilt, he talks about what our past guilt was intellectually, what our past guilt was morally, and what our past guilt was socially. It’s all right there, in that verse, so look at it.

### A. What Our Past Guilt Was Intellectually

What does he say we were intellectually? What was our past guilt intellectually? He says, “We were foolish” (Titus 3:3). The word *foolish* doesn’t mean, here, “lacking in intelligence.” That’s not the idea. You can have a big IQ and be foolish. The Bible says, great men are not always wise. Put in your margins: “1 Corinthians chapter 1, verses 18 through 20.” Listen to this: “*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*” Amen? If you’re saved, it is the power of God. If you’re not, it may seem foolish. And then, God says: “*For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise...*”—that is, the intellectual top waters, the high muckety-mucks—“*I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing*

*the understanding of the prudent.*” And then, God throws out this challenge: “*Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*” (1 Corinthians 1:18–20).

Question: If we’re so smart, why are we in such a mess? Think about it. If we’re so smart, why are we tottering on the brink? God says, “What all of you have wanted, education does.” Now the cross that we preach is foolish to this world (1 Corinthians 1:18). As Brother Hamada sang, “It’s Christ alone.” We’re saved by the cross alone: by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

The statesmen, the movers, the shakers, the philosophers, the thinkers, the educators—they don’t understand this. It’s foolishness unto them. I remember our Lord said over there, in John chapter 3, verse 14: “*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish*” (John 3:14–15). Remember what had happened? The people had disobeyed God, and God sent fiery serpents there, into the camp, to bite them, because the serpent is a symbol of sin. And you can’t even say *sin* without sounding like a serpent. And the serpent is the symbol of sin. And the people were dying. And they went to Moses, and Moses went to God; and, God said to Moses, “Make a brazen serpent, and put it upon a pole; and, tell the people that whoever looks at the serpent in faith will be healed of his snake bite” (Numbers 21:8). It’s a wonderful Old Testament graphic illustration of salvation, because in the New Testament, the Bible says, in John 3, verse 14: “*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up*” (John 3:14).

That brazen serpent represents the Lord Jesus. You say, “*A serpent representing Jesus?*” Yes. Him who knew no sin, God hath made to be sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). He took our sin and carried it to the cross. Brass is a symbol of judgment, and Jesus was sin being judged—that’s what it’s all about. And in the Old Testament, they were told to look and to live.

I want you to go back into that desert time. I want you to imagine what it must have been like. Those fiery serpents were everywhere, under the bedcovers, behind the bushes, behind the ground; people were dying everywhere. Faces were white with fear. Hands were trembling; eyes were red with tears. There were hurried funerals everywhere. I want you to imagine a woman whose husband has been snake-bitten, and he is dying. She hurries to the tent, her face radiant as the noonday sun. She says to her husband, “Husband, oh, I’ve got wonderful news! You don’t have to die. God has made a provision. Moses went to God, and God told Moses, if he put a serpent upon a pole, that whoever would look at it would be healed of snakebite; and, husband, hallelujah! You’re going to live. You don’t have to die.”

Now just imagine that husband saying, “Now wait just a moment, hold it, right now,

where you are. Are you talking about the brass snake theory?” “Well, well, sweetheart, I’m talking about it, but there’s no theory. People have been healed all over the camp. I mean, it’s, it’s wonderful. It’s not a theory.” He says, “Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I’m sick. I’m miserable. I’m dying. And you come in here with your foolish, superstitious religion! I am not the smartest man in the world, but I’m smart enough to know there’s no possible connection between my dying condition and some stupid piece of metal on a pole. Now it’s bad enough in here, without you bringing your religion into this household. And I refuse to have you speak to me about that anymore. Do you understand, lady?” “But husband…” “No buts about it. I don’t want to hear anymore about a brass serpent.” And so he dies. Well, “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Now you can refuse Christ, if you want to. “*We...were sometime foolish*” (Titus 3:3). And look, as he goes on to describe what we were, intellectually: “*disobedient*” (Titus 3:3). Do you know what the word *disobedient* means? It doesn’t mean simply that we disobey. I looked this word up, and it has the idea of willful, obstinate, stubborn disobedience—disobedience in the light of truth. I mean, not wanting to know the truth.

I was reading an account of a lawyer. And this lawyer was arguing about the truth of Christianity with another person. And then, this person asked this lawyer a very penetrating question: “Well, now, wait a minute, I want to ask you this question: If you were convinced that Jesus Christ was the Son of God—if you were convinced—would you follow Him?” He said, “No.” See, his problem was not in his mind; his problem was in his heart.

That’s what this word *disobedient* means here. It has the idea of being unyielding. And then, it says, “*deceived*” (Titus 3:3). Why are we so foolish? Why are we so willfully disobedient before we get saved? Because, there’s a devil—the great deceiver. The Bible says, he deceives the whole world (Revelation 12:9). And if you die, and go to Hell, you can say, “Satan lied to me; he deceived me.” That’s what we were, intellectually, before we got saved. Thank God we got saved out of it, by the grace of God; because no one like this would be saved, apart from the grace of God.

#### **B. What Our Past Guilt Was Morally**

And look what we were morally. Look at it: “*Serving divers lusts and pleasures*” (Titus 3:3). Weymouth translates it this way: “habitual slaves to all sorts of passions”—that’s how we were. That’s our past guilt. We were just simply living for us, for self: “habitual slaves to all sorts of passions.” You know, living in sin is not only a vice; it’s a trap. The more we’re into it, the deeper we sink. It may be the sins of the back alley: the drugs, and sex, and violence. It may be the refined pleasures and treasures of the social club,

and the boulevard, and the niceties of this world. But it doesn't make any difference: sin is sin.

### C. **What Our Past Guilt Was Socially**

And then, he talks about what we were, not only intellectually, not only what we were morally, but he talks about what we were socially: *“living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another”* (Titus 3:3). Now the reason we hate one another is we're hateful. I mean, the problem is in us. You say, “I can't get along with other people.” Well, it's because you can't get along with yourself. We're *“hateful, and hating one another”* (Titus 3:3).

I was reading *U.S. News and World Report* this week, and I saw that, in America, the crime bill now is 674 billion dollars a year. Can you imagine what 674 billion dollars could do to feed, and clothe, and house people? That's the crime bill in America. I'm not talking about what is stolen; I'm talking about the bill that we pay for crime. We're in a mess in America. I mean, we're in a mess!

Let me give you something that ought to cause you to hang your head. According to William Bennett, former Secretary of Education of the United States of America, in a recent report, he has said that, since 1960—are you listening to this? How many of you were living in 1960? That's most of you—since 1960—are you ready?—there has been a 560% increase in violent crime. I said, “560%.” I didn't say it had doubled. That's since 1960—in your lifetime. What is that? Well, friend, the problem is one little three-letter word, and it's *sin*. That's an old-fashioned word, isn't it? It is sin. Past guilt—that's what we were: what we were intellectually, what we were morally, and what we were socially—*“hateful, and hating one another”* (Titus 3:3).

You say, “Well, Pastor Rogers, I've never committed a crime like that. I guess I must be all right.” Do you know yourself? Righteousness is the most stinking sin of all. Let me tell you something: It is not the amount of sin; it is the fact of sin that condemns us. More people have drowned in 9 feet of water than have drowned in 90 feet. We are sinners: sinners by birth, sinners by nature, sinners by choice, and sinners under condemnation. But most of the people in America are egomaniacs, strutting to Hell, thinking they're too good to be damned.

## II. **Present Grace**

Paul tells us, in verse 3, what we were—that's past guilt. But now, I want you to see what we are—present grace. Oh, thank God for this!

Look, if you will, in verse 4. And verse 4 begins with a little word: *but*. I love it: *but*. This is a corner verse here. God turns the corner—hallelujah! *“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of*

*righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us*” (Titus 3:4–5). Why are we saved? What is this present grace?

#### **A. It Is Rooted in the Sovereign Love of the Father**

Number one: It is rooted in the sovereign love of the Father. Look at verse 4: “*After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour...appeared*” (Titus 3:4). Do you know what you have going for you today? God loves you. God loves you.

Some time ago, I heard a preacher named Buckner Fanning preach a message, and he told a story in that message. I have not been able to forget it. It was about a man who lost his dog somewhere out in the Midwest, I believe. He put an ad in the paper, and it said something like this: “Lost Dog. Reward offered. Mixed breed. Limps, due to automobile accident, and arthritic condition. Blind in one eye. Large patches of fur missing, due to mange. Does not hear well. Answers to the name *Lucky*.” And he said, “And I agree with him. You know, he was a lucky dog.” You know why? Somebody loved him. Somebody loved him—not for anything else. Somebody loved him. When you think about us, folks, we’re more than lucky dogs. We’re blessed, because God loves us. That’s grace.

The Bible says, “*God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners...*” (Romans 5:8). But God loved us—verse 4 (Titus 3:4). That’s grace. *God doesn’t love us because we’re valuable; we’re valuable because God loves us.* That’s what the gospel is all about. And so he says, “It’s *‘not by works of righteousness which we have done’*” (Titus 3:5). I mean, if it were by works of righteousness we have done, how could we save ourselves? Because, the Bible says, in Isaiah 64, verse 6: “*All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6), in God’s sight.

Those of you who are still trying to work your way to Heaven: How are you going to do it? You don’t have any righteousness. Even our righteousness is as filthy rags in God’s sight (Isaiah 64:6). Let me tell you how *grace* spells “salvation”: not *do*, and not *don’t*, but *done*—that’s the way you spell it. It is not addition; there is nothing you can do that will take away what you’ve already done. It is not subtraction; there is nothing you can stop doing. *If you drink, and you stop drinking, without getting saved, you’ll just go to Hell sober.* What I’m trying to say is, sin is sin; it must be atoned for. And if you try anything other than the grace of God, you’re going to die, and go to Hell.

I read somewhere about a man who fell out of a rowboat into the Niagara River. And the river was flowing toward the falls. And they tried to save him. And so they threw him a rope, and he held the rope a while; but then, he saw a log coming past, and let go of the rope, and grabbed hold of the log. That was pretty stupid, wasn’t it? Because both he and the log went over the falls. See, no matter what else you hold onto, if you are not linked by the rope of grace to the heart of God, you’re going to perish.

It's *"not by works of righteousness [that] we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us"* (Titus 3:5). And I'm so glad—I'm so glad we're not saved by works; because, you know, if we were saved by works, we could brag about it. Ephesians 2:8 and 9 says, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8–9).

When I played high school football, I played Daytona. And it was raining. It was a miserable night. There was water standing on the field. I roomed that night with a big tackle. I mean, he was a big guy. In the course of the game, just by happenstance, a pass was intercepted by this tackle. Now he was not the pass-intercepting type. He was overweight. Actually, he didn't actually intercept it; it just fell there and stuck; and, he looked down and there it was, so he wrapped both hands around it. I want to tell you something, folks: It seemed to me that we blocked every man on the field in order to get him down the field. Now he wasn't a speedster. When he ran, he would say, "Right leg, left leg." But Scotty—he scored. I mean, he ran it back, and I roomed with the bird. All night long, he talked about those brilliant moves, and how he went down the field. I'd hate to be in Heaven with people talking about how they got themselves to Heaven.

The Bible says, *"[It is] not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:9). Friend, we're going to Heaven, by the grace of God. And all glory, and praise, and honor goes to Him. You won't be able to make that much of it. *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done"* (Titus 3:5).

## **B. It Is Rooted in the Supernatural Work of the Spirit**

What is the grace of God? Well, listen to me, friend. It is the sovereign love of the Father; and secondly, it is the supernatural work of the Spirit.

Look, if you will, now, in verse 5: *"By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"* (Titus 3:5). The love of the Father, and the work of the Spirit. You see, salvation is supernatural. He regenerates us. He calls it, *"the washing of regeneration"* (Titus 3:5). This is not baptism. Water on your skin can't take sin out of your heart.

How are we washed? Put these scriptures down: Zechariah 13, and verse 1, in the Old Testament: *"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness"* (Zechariah 13:1). There's going to be a fountain, and you can wash in that fountain for sin and uncleanness. Well, what is that fountain? Revelation chapter 1 and verse 5—the Bible speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it calls Him *"the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth."* And then, it says: *"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."* Listen to it: *"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"* (Revelation 1:5). In Revelation chapter 7, verse 14, a great multitude is there: *"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said*

to me, *These are they...*”—listen to it—“*These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*” (Revelation 7:14). We’re not washed in water, friend; we’re washed in blood. But we are washed.

Put this verse down: 1 Corinthians chapter 6. And if you’ve been in deep sin, listen to this. This is a shouting verse, if there ever was one: “*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Corinthians 6:9–10). You say, “Well, Pastor Rogers, what’s so good about that?” Well, listen to verse 11: “*And such were some of you: but ye are washed*” (1 Corinthians 6:11). You’re sanctified. He doesn’t say, “*Such are you.*” You may have been a fornicator. You may have been an adulterer. You may have been sexually perverted. You may have been a thief, an extortioner, an adulterer; but, when you get saved, you are washed whiter than snow in the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

There’s a wonderful lady in our Southern Baptist Convention who was a street harlot in San Antonio. She got saved, and in her testimony—and I love to hear her give it—she said, “I got on my knees a filthy harlot; I got up a pure virgin.”

“*Such were some of you*” (1 Corinthians 6:11). Hey folks, you’re not just painted over; you’re not just remodeled. You’re made new. “*If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature: old things are*”—what?—“*passed away*” (2 Corinthians 5:17). They’re gone, buried in the grave of God’s forgetfulness. There is the washing of regeneration. How? “*In the blood of the Lamb*” (Revelation 7:14).

*There is a fountain filled with blood  
drawn from Emmanuel’s veins;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
lose all their guilty stains.*

—WILLIAM COWPER

Friend, that’s grace. Folks say, “Well, are you saved?” “Well, I’m a dyed-in-the-wool Baptist.” Better be a washed-in-the-blood Baptist. It doesn’t make any difference. *You can be a Baptist, and go to Hell; but, you can’t be saved, and go to Hell, no matter what denomination you are. And if you’re saved, you’re going to be saved by the grace of God. There’s no other way to be saved.*

### **C. It Is Rooted in the Saving Death of the Son**

What is this present grace? Friend, it’s the love of the Father. It’s the work of the Spirit: “*By the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*” (Titus 3:5). Now He makes you new, and He keeps renewing. This means, He continues action. Day by day,

moment by moment, He keeps us; He renews us; He restores us; He refreshes us. His mercies are new every day (Lamentations 3:22–23). He doesn't just forgive us, and then say, "That's it." Oh, this is the grace of God: It is the sovereign love of the Father; it is the supernatural work of the Spirit; and it is the saving death of the Son.

Look, if you will, in verse 6: "*Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour*" (Titus 3:6). And by the way, our Savior is God; because, let me just show you something, while we're in the neighborhood: Verse 4 calls God "*our Saviour*," and verse 6 calls Jesus Christ "*our Saviour*" (Titus 3:4, 6). Now is God our Savior, or is Jesus Christ our Savior? The answer is *yes*. The answer is *yes*. God is our Savior. Jesus Christ died for us. There's the sacrificial work of the Savior. He provided Himself, an innocent sacrifice. He bore our sin. Jesus stepped out of Heaven, came to this Earth, lived a sinless life, allowed puny hands of man to strike Him on His cheeks; there, in Pilate's judgment hall, they took bamboo clubs, and they put a crown of thorns on His head, then beat Him upon the head. Then, they blindfolded Him, and played *blind man's bluff* with Him. They played games with the King of kings. They shoved Him from one of those wicked soldiers to another.

And there was the Son of God, being brutalized. They would take their big fists and strike Him in the face with their fists. The blood would run down His nostrils. They would say, "Ha, if You're a prophet, tell us, now, who hit You?" And they'd strike Him. The Bible says that they pulled the beard from His face. His face looked like a piece of raw meat. They spat in His face—human spit in the face of God. Then, they took Him out, stripped His garments from Him, put Him on a rack, until His back was smooth as silk, and then, they took some psychopathic dungeon-keeper, who was probably a volunteer for the job, and with a whip called *a cat of nine tails*, with little bits of bone, and nail, and glass in the end, they began to flay open the back of the Lord Jesus Christ. Flesh would hang down like ribbons. Many people died just from the flogging, just from the scourging.

After that, they put a purple robe on Him. They put a wilted reed in His hand, and they bowed down, and said, "*Hail, King of the Jews*" (Matthew 27:29). Then, they took Him out, stretched Him out on a hellish cross, and took great spikes, and a cold hammer, and drove those nails through His quivering flesh. And those fingers clutched those cold nails and torn flesh. They drove those nails into His feet. They lifted that cross up, dropped it. Jesus Christ there, in the taunting rabble, in the crowd, suffered as no one else has ever suffered.

But O friend, not the fist in the face, not the nails, not the crown of thorns, not the mockery, but consider this: that God the Father had to turn His back on Jesus, because He became sin. And the Bible says that God the Father is "*of purer eyes than to behold evil*" (Habakuk 1:13). And Jesus, Jesus, "*him...who knew no sin*," took mine and yours,

and carried it to the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21). Do you know what you call that, friend? Grace. That's grace. That is grace. And I love Him. I love Jesus. I do.

*Blessed Redeemer! Precious Redeemer!  
Seems now I see Him on Calvary's tree;  
Wounded and bleeding, for sinners pleading,  
Blind and unheeding—dying for me.*

—AVIS M. CHRISTIANSEN

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me.*

—JOHN NEWTON

This is present grace: the love of the Father, the work of the Spirit, the death of the Savior. Thank God for His amazing grace.

### III. Our Future Glory

Then, I want you to see something, dear friend: not only our past guilt, not only our present grace, but I want you to see our future glory. There it is: guilt, grace, glory.

Verse 3 speaks of our guilt (Titus 3:3). Verses 4 through 6 speak of grace (Titus 3:4–6). And verse 7 speaks of glory (Titus 3:7). Look at it: In order *“that”*—because of that—*“being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”* (Titus 3:7). That's talking about what is coming. That is talking about your future. Heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs of Jesus Christ. Do you know what a *joint heir* is? A *joint heir* means we share and share alike. We are heirs of God. We inherit all things. The Bible says, we *“inherit all things”* (Revelation 21:7). The best is yet to come.

Now the Bible calls the Holy Spirit in our hearts, that we have right now, the *down payment*. The Holy Spirit in our hearts, right now, is called, *“the earnest of our inheritance”* (Ephesians 1:14). Do you know what the word *earnest* means? You're going to buy something, you give somebody some *earnest* money. You see, the Holy Spirit in your heart is the earnest money. You're getting the full legacy later on. You don't have it all now. It is a future glory. That's the reason I told you this world is not our home. We're just pilgrims; we're just passing through.

Do you know what I love in the Old Testament? I love the story of the man named Eliezer, who was sent by Abraham to get a bride for Isaac (Genesis 15). Isaac is a picture in the Old Testament of the Lord Jesus Christ. He's a type of Christ. Eliezer is a picture and a type of the Holy Spirit, who seeks a bride for Jesus. Abraham is a picture of God the Father, who sent Eliezer to seek a bride for his son, 'cause God the Father is seeking a bride for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what the Old Testament story is all about. I love that story, because it's such a beautiful story.

Can you imagine Eliezer? Abraham gives Eliezer, now, all kinds of incredible wealth.

So Eliezer has all of the disposal of the Father at his hand, to go seek a bride. And Eliezer goes into a far country, and there, he finds the one led of God, whose name was Rebekah. Now you talk about a salesman. You talk about a salesman! Eliezer had to convince Rebekah to go with him to marry a man she'd never seen. Now think about it: She went with a man she'd never seen to marry a man she'd never seen. That's pretty persuasive, isn't it? That's an illustration of how the Holy Spirit teaches us to love Jesus, "*whom having not seen, [we] love*" (1 Peter 1:8). See, that's the work of the Holy Spirit. The whole time, Eliezer's telling Rebekah about Isaac: how handsome Isaac is, how strong Isaac is, how wealthy Isaac is, what a wonderful father Isaac has, how blessed she's going to be, how she's going to inherit so much. And so he tells her all of this, and finally, Rebekah says, "Eliezer, all right, I'll go." And they start back to Canaan. And there's Rebekah and Eliezer. Eliezer's the servant, representing the Holy Spirit, and the Bible says that, along the way, he would take treasures and gifts, and give them to Rebekah.

You know, they'd be going along there. Isaac would look over, and see her chin quivering a little bit, maybe see a tear in the corner of her eye, maybe see her just fumbling with her fingers, and he would say, "You know, she's sad. She's homesick. She's a little nervous. She's wondering, "Is there really an Isaac? Is he really that wonderful? Is he really that rich?" You know what old Eliezer would do? He'd open that little box of jewels. He'd take a necklace out, and put it around her neck. "That's from Isaac. He just wanted you to have it." A little later on, you know, they'd be going along, and he'd see her tear again, and he'd reach in, and get a ring, and put it on her hand, and say, "That's from Isaac. He just wanted you to have it. You'll love Isaac." All the way, he was dropping little gifts, little tokens into her heart, till that day she arrived. And there was Isaac, standing there, at the edge of the field. And when she met him, she'd already heard so much about him, she knew him. She didn't need any introduction. Eliezer had done his job.

Friend, that's what the dear Holy Spirit does for us. All along the way, He just drops little gems into your heart. He sees our fears; he sees our tears. He says, "This is from Jesus; He just wanted you to have it. This is a jewel of joy. This is a pearl of peace. He wanted you to have it." But friend, we get the full legacy later on. Right now, we have the earnest of the Spirit. He was giving little tokens, little down payments. But you see, the Bible speaks of our future glory. We're going to inherit all things (Revelation 21:7).

## **Conclusion**

Aren't you glad you are saved? I mean, think of our past guilt. Think of our present grace. Think of our future glory with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the amazing grace of God.

Now if I were to offer you the money in this billfold—“Say, how much is in there, preacher?” Not much. If I were to offer you money in this billfold, I’d say, “You want the money? Come get the billfold. When you got the billfold, you get the money that’s in it.” Friend, when you receive Jesus, you receive the eternal life that’s in Jesus. You can’t have that life without having Jesus. In Him is life. Receive Him.

See, salvation is a gift. You receive it. You’ll never earn it. You say, “Come into my heart, Lord Jesus, and save me, for Christ’s sake,” and He will.

Let’s bow our heads for prayer. Father, thank You for Your Word, today. And O God, how I pray that You will seal it to our hearts. And I pray, today, that many will come to know Jesus as personal Savior and Lord.