

## **Living in the World**

[Titus 2:9-3:2](#)

Can you imagine buying a brand new Cadillac with the Northstar system and with all of the gold accoutrements on it, and then parking it in the garage and never driving it because you didn't want to get it scratched or dirty?

Can you imagine buying a yacht with room for six to sleep under the deck, stylishly designed and beautifully painted, and then never putting it in the water because you didn't want the water to damage the wood?

It would be ridiculous to buy a car and then never drive it. That's the purpose of having a car.

It would be foolish to buy a yacht and then never put it in the water. That's what it was made for.

I don't think anyone here this morning would disagree with what I have said so far. Yet, as Christians, there is this distorted view that we need to withdraw from the world lest we be contaminated.

Actually, we were made to live in the world. That's why Jesus told us we are "the salt of the earth." That's why He called us "the light of the world."

Salt in biblical times was not only used for seasoning but also for medicine. Salt cannot bring flavor to the earth unless it touches the earth.

Lighting is really taken for granted and our dependence on it is not fully realized until it is taken away from us. After hurricane Ike, many didn't have electricity for several weeks. Night time was especially hard on people because we simply were not used to being in areas that were not brightly lit. It is not surprising that many experienced emotions such as fear, despair, and anxiety. Light cannot illuminate the world unless it penetrates the world.

With that in mind our role as Christians become even more important. As “light and salt of the world” we should brighten every situation we are in, there should be a sense of peace, joy, and contentment, that flows from us, and healing should be on our lips, because our words are seasoned with life, grace, and peace.

Jesus did not want to take us out of the world. He wanted to take the world out of us and then send us back into the world so that we can bring the world to Him.

Some would like to spend their time in the relative safety and comfort of our relationships in the church, but we cannot do that. We *must* not do that. We are also to live in the world. That is a part of our calling as Christians.

How then are we to live in the world?

Paul dealt with that issue in our text for today by relating the Christian faith to three dimensions of our lives:

- our work life ([2:9-10](#)),
- our social life ([2:12-14](#))
- and our political life ([3:1-2](#)).

## I. Our Work Life

**Tit 2:9** *Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;*

**Tit 2:10** *Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

In verses 9 and 10, Paul addressed slaves. Interestingly enough, Paul did not rebuke the institution of slavery and demand that it be ended immediately. Paul recognized that this was a part of the social framework of that day which could not be changed instantaneously. Instead of rebelling against their masters, Christians who were slaves

George Barna, the Christian pollster, said in one of his books: "Survey data shows that most Americans believe that you cannot tell a born-again Christian from nonbelievers because there is no difference in the way they live."

Is there a difference in your life? If your testimony was dynamite, would you have enough to blow your nose?

### 3. **Our faith should affect our citizenship.**

This angry, defiant, rebellious attitude toward the government both federal and civil is not the dominant note of Scripture. According to the New Testament, Christians are:

- to obey their leaders,
- to pray for their leaders, and
- to support their leaders.

All we have to do is turn on the TV and we quickly realize that this is not practiced today. Do you display your Christianity in your citizenship?

If every Christian in the United States would be a good citizen and a good neighbor, most of the problems we are confronted with today would disappear. In fact, if every Christian had practiced good citizenship, most of the laws oppressing us today would have never been passed, and I am a firm believer this morning that we would be witness to presidential candidates of a much higher caliber than those that are before us now. It is long past time that we the silent majority break away from the protective cocoon of the church walls and become an active part of our communities. Instead of staying and praying maybe we should be hitting the pavement and be salt and light.

were to demonstrate their faith as they carried out their roles as slaves. What did that mean?

Paul told the slaves, first of all:

### **Tit 2:9 Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters**

Why? The master/slave relationship was built on a certain chain of command. The master was in charge and gave the orders. The slave was responsible to follow those orders. The master/slave system was based on that assumption. Being a Christian did not free a slave from his role and responsibility in society.

Paul went further. Slaves were not only to obey their masters. They were to do so with the right attitude. Paul admonished the Christian slaves:

### **Tit 2:9 ... to please *them* well in all *things*; not answering again;**

Please look at the phrase, "not answering again."

antilegō

an-til'-eg-o

From [G473](#) and [G3004](#); to *dispute, refuse*: - answer again, contradict, deny, gainsay (-er), speak against.

Two-year-old Jimmy jumped up on the couch with his shoes on. His mother told him to sit down. He refused. Again, she ordered him to sit down. Again, he refused. She swatted him on the leg and said, "I told you to sit down." He sat down, crossed his arms, and responded, "I may be sitting down on the outside but I'm still standing up on the inside."

That's how some people obey, with outward compliance accompanied by inward defiance. The Christian is to go beyond that. Our action must be matched by our attitude. Outward compliance must be accompanied with inward allegiance.

Instead of talking back to their masters (the negative) Christian slaves were to try to please their masters (the positive). Their action was to be matched by their attitude.

Paul went further still. Slaves were not only to obey their masters. They were not only to obey them with the right attitude.

**Tit 2:10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.**

I would like you to look at two words here. The first is purloining. It means to keep back for oneself. This word has to do with stealing, specifically embezzlement. The second word I would draw to your attention is the word fidelity. It is the Greek word pistis, and it means believe or trust.

So, the slaves were to obey their masters with the right attitude all the time. Not just when they were being watched but in everything. And they were "not to steal from their masters, but to show that they can be fully trusted."

Many times, when a master was not looking, the slave would hold back in his work or he would take something that did not belong to him. Christians slaves were to be different. They were to live in such a way that their masters could count on what they said and could count on them to do their best in every endeavor. They were to be dependable.

Why was this important, for Christian slaves to be dependable in their actions and congenial in their attitude? Paul explained at the end of verse 10: "so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive."

The old adage, "A Christian is the only Bible many people will ever read" is absolutely true. Whether people think Christianity is repulsive or attractive will depend on us. Whether people think Christianity is worthwhile or worthless will depend on us. Whether people want to be a part of the church or be apart from the church will depend on us.

Again, this was not to be an outward compliance which was in conflict with the inner spirit. Christians are not to be obedient grudgingly. Instead, they are to be obedient because of a desire to do what is good for the state.

Second, we are to be *good neighbors* who get along with others.

**Tit 3:2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.**

Paul said we are "to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men."

Notice the move from the negative ("to slander no one") to the positive ("to be peaceable and considerate.") It is easier to refrain from doing bad than it is to do good. Yet, our responsibility as Christians goes beyond the easy and the ordinary to the difficult and the extraordinary. We are "to show true humility toward all men."

As good citizens, Christians are to be obedient to all laws. As good neighbors, Christians are to display a gentle spirit toward all people. How is that possible? It is only possible because of the grace of God. We will see what Paul said about grace next week.

### **What does this mean for us today?**

Let me conclude with these quick suggestions.

#### **1. Our faith should affect the way we do our work.**

In the Moore Memorial Church in Shanghai China, church members are specially honored at places of employment because of their honesty.

Do the people you work with know you are a Christian? Does it cause them to honor you?

#### **2. Our faith should affect the way we live our lives.**

In verse 14, Paul pointed to *the past*.

Why should we live self-controlled, upright and godly lives?

Because of what Jesus has done for us in the past. When He lived on this earth, Jesus "gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." Jesus gave His life so that we might have life. That truth about the past should motivate us to live holy lives today.

**Tit 2:15** **These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.**

Because of these two truths—the expectation of Jesus' coming in the future and the reality of Jesus' sacrifice in the past—Titus was to persist in his work of proclaiming the gospel to the people of Crete. He was to:

- proclaim the gospel urgently ("exhort or encourage and rebuke")
- proclaim the gospel confidently ("with all authority"), and to
- proclaim the gospel creatively ("do not let anyone despise you" which means "to think around" or to ignore).

And we should be doing the same thing.

### III. Our Political Life

There is another dimension of our life in the world. We not only exist in the work world and in the social world. We also exist in the political world. How are we to relate in the political world? Paul gave two recommendations.

First, we are to be *good citizens* who follow the laws. Paul said,

**Tit 3:1** **Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,**

Christian slaves were not to use their new found freedom to wreak havoc in society. Instead, they were to live within the system in such a way and with such an attitude that they made Christianity attractive to their masters.

Don't think this is just an incidental discussion relating to an anachronistic social system. These are relevant recommendations for Christian workers today. The master/slave relationship of the ancient world can be compared to the employer/employee relationship today. Everything Paul said to slaves can be applied to our lives today as employees.

We, too, are to be submissive to our employers, recognizing their authority over us and our responsibility to them.

We, too, are to display the right attitude in our work.

We, too, are to be dependable, carrying out our assignments with an excellence and a commitment that convinces our employers that we can be counted on.

We are not to withdraw from the world, nor to rebel against the world. Instead, we are to live in the work world in such a way that we make Christianity attractive to others.

### II. Our Social Life

We not only exist in the work world. We also exist in the social world. How are we to act in our relationships with other people in the social world? Paul addressed that subject in the final verses of chapter two. Verse 11 is a transitional verse.

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

In this verse, Paul declared the foundation for this life in society. He said, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men." What a fantastic verse! We could spend our entire time this morning on this single verse. Notice the four key ideas of the verse.

Paul referred, first of all, to "**the grace of God**." That is the foundation of all we do. We are to live distinctively Christian lives not in order to obtain the favor of God but because we have already had the favor of God bestowed upon us. God's grace is the expression of His love for us when we needed it the most and deserved it the least.

What did the grace of God do? Paul said the grace of God "**brings salvation**." I know that to some people, because of the distortions of the past, the idea of being saved is not an appealing idea. Yet, what a marvelous thought is encompassed in that word. It pictures:

- finding a meaning for life,
- finding a true friend, Jesus Christ,
- being forgiven of our sins,
- becoming a part of the family of God, and
- having our eternal destiny changed from hell to heaven.

That's what God's grace does for us. It provides salvation.

However, the grace of God which brings salvation is not just a speculative thought which was conjured up in the mind of some great sage.

Instead, our text says that the grace of God "**has appeared**." The word describes the sudden appearance of something which was not seen before, like the sun peeking out over the horizon at sunrise. What an image!

Mankind was engulfed by the darkness which came as a result of sin. Then Christ came, and his appearance was like the sun, illuminating the darkness with a burst of light, and He revealed to us God's amazing grace.

The most incredible part of the verse is probably the last phrase. This grace of God which was manifest in Christ and which brings salvation "**has appeared to all men**." This does not mean that all *will* be saved but that all *can* be saved.

As one man put it, "Grace did not bypass the aged because they are aged, nor women because they are women, nor slaves because they are merely slaves, etc. It dawned upon all, regardless of age, sex, or social standing."

This grace which brings salvation through Christ to all who believe will make a difference in a person's life. Paul spelled out that difference in verses 12-14.

**Tit 2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;**

In verse 12, Paul described the kind of life we are to live. He said that the grace of God "teaches us to say `No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age."

What is our motivation? Paul pointed in two directions.

**Tit 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;**

In verse 13, he pointed to *the future*. Why should we live self-controlled, upright and godly lives? Because of what Jesus is going to do in the future. There will be a time in the future when God's plan will be brought to completion in "the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." Jesus is coming folks. As bad as things get down here, as discouraging as it gets, we can live we can live our lives with a confident smile on our face. Because in the midst of all of this chaos, we have hope. And that hope is based on a sure promise that our King, our Lord, our Savior is coming back for us. He has prepared a place for us, He is coming to get us, and we will be with Him forever. God is in charge and someday He will bring His plan to fulfillment. That single truth about the future should motivate us to live holy lives today. But Paul didn't leave it there. Look at verse 14.

**Tit 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.**