

Grace That Disciples

Beautifying the Bride, p.3

By Jeff Noblit

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We go back to Titus chapter 2 this morning as we are preaching through the book of Titus, and it just so happens that the sermon I preached last week is a fitting foundation for the truths that Paul is instructing to Titus to teach the churches the out of line, uh disorganized, um maybe somewhat rebellious, if not out and out rebellious congregations on the island of Crete. So Titus' job is to straighten things out, to get things back in order in the churches on the island of Crete. Now Crete was a wild and woolly place, full of rebellion and ungodliness and sensualities and immoralities and so the church is saved out of that, and it's quite a process to get to where, let's say a church is functioning and striving to be biblically, spiritually healthy, or what I'd call a true church. And so that's Titus' job.

Now he's gonna talk a lot about grace in this section we're gonna look at and one way to view grace is, of course, that it is God's sovereign choice to favor, God's sovereign choice to cast favor toward one and it involves his heart of love for that one he casts favor toward and his actions of love toward that one he's cast favor toward. I don't know exactly, well, I do know, I do know. I was gonna say, I don't know why God's cast certain favor toward others and not favor for for another one. I do know, for his own glory, for his own glory. Uh the Scriptures tell us God does whatever he pleases so get over it. That's just about that's where we are people as humans, amen? We just yield to this great and holy God.

Now, last Sunday, we looked at justification and justification is God shined his divine favor toward us so that through the merits of his Son, Jesus Christ, we can stand righteous before a holy God. Our standing is now just through the kind favor of him sending his Son to die for us and redeem us, give us his righteousness. So that's justification. Secondly, go ahead and put those three on the screen guys. Secondly, sanctification. That's a grace of God. God shines his grace toward us so that we are now enabled to have new godly desires, new godly affections from our hearts, and to begin to walk out those new desires and affections in our daily lives. We call this progressive sanctification and everyone who's had justification will have progressive sanctification, all right? And then thirdly, we have the grace of glorification. In God's divine favor toward us, in this love he's cast toward us, in these actions he's participating in for our own good, did we did not merit them, we did not deserve them, it's just grace, it's favor. There will one day be a

glorification. We sang a lot about that this morning when he returns and finally cleanses our old bodies, regenerates our old bodies into glorified sinless new bodies, and thus we will always be with the Lord.

Now today's text centers on the second one, the grace of sanctification or discipleship. All right, discipleship is kind of a broad word that covers the totality of our growing in the Lord, including how we sharpen and disciple one another in what we call home life discipleship. And Brother Tim, back there in the the world of sound engineering and screen engineering and media production, I'm gonna use the wheel in a moment, so if you would get the wheel ready to put on the screen here in a moment. So all the elements of home life, discipleship, all the elements of local church life, sitting under the preaching of the word, small group ministries where iron sharpens iron, one man sharpens another, that's all a favor, that's all a grace gift that we get to be disciplined and grow in Jesus Christ.

All right, let's look at the text together. Uh Titus chapter 2, verses 11 through 15. He begins with the conjunctive word "For," because he's connected verse 11 with the very practical exhortations and commands of verses 2 through 10 that we've gone through, well, for weeks and weeks, actually.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us [or discipling us or training us] to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people

Have I told you before, God's all about having him a people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds. Now he gives a personal word to Titus. The rest of that is for Titus and for Titus to uh uh teach to the churches on the island island of Crete. Now to Titus, verse 15.

15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority [Titus]
Let no one disregard you.

All right, even though we're talking about, and really the the text centers in the grace of God that allows us to grow in discipleship, all right, that's what the the centerpiece of the text is, nevertheless, Paul weaves in various things here, but I'm convinced he weaves in various things all to the end that we renew our vigor, uh we renew our conviction and commitment about growing in Christ, growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Now, first of all, let's notice, I., grace unveiled. He simply says in verse 11, "For the grace of God has appeared," made manifest, the past tense, the grace of God came to man. All right, subpoint 1 here, to save. The grace of God appeared, it became manifest in time and space history, and you might add that glorious truth that was somewhat hidden in the Old Testament is marvelously marvelously unveiled and unfolded and made manifest in the New Testament, that is, Jesus Christ and his work of redeeming men and

building his own church. So first of all, it's to save. He says the grace, verse 11, "For the grace of God appeared, bringing salvation." Now again, just for the flow of the context, let's go up to the first word of verse 11, "For the grace of God has appeared." Uh the point is everything in verses 11 through 15 connect to the preceding practical admonitions that he gave the church in verses 2 through 10. So when you look at verses 2 through 10, we'll glean back through them quickly in a moment, we feel we see these practical exhortations for Titus to straighten out the family life and the church lives of these congregants, these church members on the island of Crete and so now he gets down to uh uh a way to fuel the motivation for that discipleship, that is, the discipleship of living right with your wife, living right with your husband, raising your children right, being centered in the home and being centered in the way you function and love each other in the local church. They've gotten out of whack on all of that, all right? The point is, by giving us this conjunctive in verse 11, he's tied it to the practical applications and exhortations of verses 2 through 10 so that we learn this, are you listening, church? Say "Amen" if you're listening. We learn that sound doctrine is there to produce sound living. Sound doctrine is not just there for you to marvel over and say, "Man, when that guy preaches, we learn rich doctrine." Well, does it help you be a better disciple or you have you made an idol of studying the great doctrines and not applying the great doctrines in your own heart and life? Paul uses the great doctrines to enforce great discipleship. That's the flow of the context.

So he says here, verse 11, the grace of God hath appeared, shined forth, again, aorist tense, it's come through Jesus and it continues through to this day. And once again, if we want to define uh grace, I I like the phrase, God's sovereign choice to show to show favor, including active love toward his chosen and the actions of loving his chosen, all right? Now, the favor of God, the grace of God that's been revealed, the favor of God that's been revealed is all wrapped up in the person and the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the brightness of the Father's glory. He is the visible manifestation of this grace, this favor that comes from God. I'd outline six aspects of this appearing, this manifesting of the grace in the earth. It was hidden in the Old Testament. Now look, it was there in the Old Testament. Divine favor was shined toward Abraham, and divine favor was shined toward Isaac and and Jacob and Joseph and Daniel and Moses and many others and Israel as a nation. They had a special divine favor cast upon them, but nothing compared to the man of grace when he came, Jesus Christ. All of them were shadowy, small types of the great grace and favor God would bring through Jesus Christ and that's where, of course, Paul is camping as he exhorts Timothy to teach the churches on the island of Crete.

So Christ is made apparent. He's the grace of God that's become apparent. At his incarnation, the grace of God was manifested, made apparent. Then in his life, the grace of God was the favor of God to man was made apparent. And then in his death, the favor of God was made apparent. In his resurrection, the favor of God towards sinners was made apparent. Even in the present work of him interceding for his own at the right hand of the Father, that's the grace of God that is apparent. And then he left the Spirit of God in us, so Christ is in us through the Holy Spirit, and that's the grace of God, the favor of God toward us. And he – listen – he left the Holy Spirit of God here in your hearts so that you would have the blessed favor you don't deserve, the favor of learning to change your

affections toward God and away from this old world, the favor of changing your action and behavior toward godliness and righteousness in this earth instead of letting your heart be focused on the old world's ungodliness and unrighteousness. Folks, listen to me, the fact that you desire to hear me preach at all is a favor of God. Not that I'm the best preacher, but to hear the word of God preached, to have a desire for that requires the favor of God to be on your life so that you have a different kind of ear than you used to have.

I remember after my conversion as a college freshman, how powerfully different it was what I wanted to listen to. I didn't ever want to go to church before. I would go to church and I've had people tell me that was the poorest, weakest preaching I've ever heard and I just loved it. I thought he talked about Jesus and I just loved it because something, a favor came upon me to desire the things of God. Have you have you had that change of heart? Has the favor of God rested on you to where there's been a change in what you, not perfection now, but what you're chasing after, what you're hungry for, something stirring you? And by the way, very often, God changes you to have that new heart desire through crisis, through heartache, through trial because God doesn't waste anything for his children. He uses every bit of all that you go through for your good and for his own glory.

Well, not only does it is it to save us, this grace was unveiled to save us, quote, bringing salvation into, quote, verse 11, but also in verse 11, bringing salvation to all men, he says, verse 11 in the sense of salvation has now become available to all men. You say, "Now, Pastor, you're Calvinist. You preach this sovereign grace stuff." I preach what Paul preached. I preach what Father Augustine preached. But here's what I want to say about that, you don't have to worry about who the elect are, you don't have to worry about whose sovereign grace has chosen, you go witness to everybody urging all men to repent and believe on Christ and everyone that will, God saves. Every single one. We don't know who they are, we just know on the other side of it, God says, "Now I get all the credit. He don't get any because it was My sovereign grace that wooed him and convicted him and caused him to see his need and enabled him to repent and believe on Me." But we don't have to worry about all that, we just witness to all men everywhere everywhere, urging all men everywhere to repent and trust in Christ. It's available to all men. And when Paul says this, I'm convinced the context, the whole biblical context, it means this: the the Scriptures, or rather the salvation that comes through grace is available to all peoples, tongues, tribes, and nation. There's no race, no ethnicity, no no ethnicity, no no culture culture in the world, no people in the world that God will not save if they repent and turn to Christ. And it covers all statuses of people in any given culture. From the lowest of the low to the highest of the high, any and all can turn to Christ and be saved.

I think it's very interesting as you look at the New Testament, the number of times the epistles refer to slaves who came to faith in Christ and now are part of the church. This would have been a quite radical thing for this day for men and women, first of all, to be together in one congregation; the rabbis didn't teach the women in with the men in this day. And it was quite a powerful thing for the slaves to be included with everybody else. It doesn't matter what your social status. It doesn't matter what side of the tracks you're

from. The gospel is for everyone. The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to save us and extending to all.

Now, 2 Thessalonians 3 verse 2 tells us, "and that we will be rescued from the perverse and evil men; for not all have faith," for not all are gonna be saved. Now, if you say if you say, "Well, this means salvation for every single person," then you're a Universalist and that's a heresy. All are not saved. Not all are gonna have faith, but any who will have faith, God saves them. Actually, any who will have faith, God was saving them but anyway, it's not for this text, all right?

Now, moving on, instructing us, let let let me go to to II., I'm sorry. II. So it's not only the grace that's unveiled, secondly, it's the grace that disciplines. The grace that disciplines. Grace doesn't just give you a new standing of righteousness, i.e. justification in the sight of God. That's true. And by the way, when you believe, that's settled forever. That's new standing of I am righteous before a holy God settled forever. But God, listen to me, never ends there. When he gives you justification, he continues in grace to work out discipleship or sanctification.

So it's the grace of disciplines. Look at verse 11, the first phrase. Um, well, it's the verse 12 rather, "instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age." Instructing us is the idea, literal literally it means to bring up a child. Uh think about all that's involved in training up a child. That's usually the way this this Greek word is used, or the context is used in. It's often used of parental disciplining of a child. It includes teaching, but it includes much more than just classroom teaching. I mean, God is involved when you're a small group leader. God is involved when you have your quiet time. God is involved when your pastor preaches the word of God to instruct you. But it also includes correcting you. It also includes rebuking you. It also includes disciplining you. God says, "I'm all about teaching, instructing, correcting, reproofing, rebuking, and disciplining you." He said, "That's a favor I've cast on you that the people of the world who are not My children don't get in on." Because you don't you don't discipline other people's children. You discipline your own children. And so God said, "It's a divine favor that I come to you and require of you that you continue in progressive discipleship." You don't get justification without sanctification or discipleship.

Now this school of grace that instructs us or disciplines us begins at conversion. You enroll in the school the day you are saved and you never graduate from this school in this life but your progress in the school should be evident. God uses our elder brothers and sisters, God uses our pastors, God uses iron sharpening iron in all of this process. Uh in 1 John chapter 3, verse 2. Let me let me see if I can turn there right quick. I think Tim's got it on the screen. 1 John chapter 3, verse 2, John says, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." And that's the wrong verse, but it's a good verse, isn't it? All that trouble, that's the wrong verse.

Well, Philippians 1:25, this should flow with the message, "Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress," that's being disciples, that's progressive sanctification, "and joy in the faith."

Now, in this discipleship that's all of grace, the majority of Baptists today are looking for a church that requires no discipleship. That's not just preaching, that's just the truth. When you've got the majority of your church members who, in one sense or another, repeated a prayer in Vacation Bible School or something, they called it the new birth, they called it salvation, their hearts are not changed, they don't have new affections, they don't have the favor of new desires, and so they're not going to want to come to church, listen to me, where there is instruction, where there is correction, where there is reproof, where there is rebuke, where there is discipling to go forward. It takes a divine favor to have a heart that thinks and wants that. So in this discipleship process, there's some negative things we want to pull off or put off, that'd be sub point A, and then there are gonna be some positive things here he says we need to be putting on, all right?

First, the negatives in this gift of God, this grace of God to disciple us, he says in verse 12, "to deny ungodliness." Now, the word ungodly means, listen now, anything that is contrary to the nature and the wisdom of God. And really though, you don't have to say nature and wisdom. I just do it to amplify more because if it's according to the nature, it is of the wisdom of God. If it's of the wisdom of God, it flows out of the nature of God. But nevertheless, I'll say both. In other words, who God is matters, what he is like, what his what his attributes are, what his character is. For example, God is a God of truth therefore we would never be people of lies or non-truths. Well, that'd wipe out Washington DC, would it not? I've never seen a group of people, and I'm not saying the Right doesn't have some of it, but I've never seen people so blatantly, brazenly just lie all doggone time. Lie upon lie upon lie, deception upon twist upon twist, spin upon spin. Well, we're not that kind of people. He says, we that's that's contrary to the nature of God, so we're not like that. We revolt at that, turn from that, strive to walk differently than that. That's just one illustration of one uh type of vice or ungodliness. There's so, so, so many others. Anything that's contrary to the nature and the wisdom of God, and by the way, this is the wisdom of God right here. That's how you know for sure. Is it tall in the balance of Scripture? Well, that's the wisdom of God. Is it condemned, forbidden in the balance of Scripture? Then that's contrary to the nature and the wisdom of God.

So we have this new heart that wants to, we're not perfect at it yet, but a new heart that wants to deny anything that that contradicts the nature and the wisdom of God and this heart therefore on the other side loves and wants to honor God. The word deny here where he says "deny ungodly," this is the aorist tense. It means the moment you were saved, you put your foot down and said, "That's no longer the purpose and pattern of my life to be involved in the things the world loves, the ungodly things that now contradict my loving God's nature and wisdom. I put my foot down," aorist tense, "I've turned, and now there's continually results of that once for all turning." I'm not suggesting there's a perfect pattern to it, but there is a different purpose and pattern that marks who you are, no longer walking toward ungodliness, now walking toward godliness, that which is in harmony with the nature and the wisdom of God.

So those are things that we are putting off, that decisive mind and heart conviction that these things, quote, ungodly things must go. Now he amplifies this out, he uses the phrase in verse 12, "and worldly desires." Those have to be put off. That's all desires that are rooted in, notice my wording, rooted in this present godless world system. All the things that didn't come from God, but from a fallen, Satan-controlled, demon-possessed, worldly system. All the things it says, get all the wealth you have, that's the purpose of life. Nothing wrong with Christians being wealthy, but that's not the purpose of life. That would be a worldly desire. And we could go on and on and on with those kinds of things. We therefore are not to have the world's goals, we do not have the world's values, we do not have the world's priorities. We may do a lot of things the world does, but our heart motive behind them is very different than the world's heart motive. We know it's all to the end of another kingdom and another life and another world and another being. Our God is not just about us. We include God. We make God first in all of our decisions and actions.

Can I just stop right here and challenge you? Are you on that trajectory? That's why he gave you grace to give you justification, but also sanctification, discipleship, which is the core intention of our text. You see, we're of a different world. 1 Peter 2:11 says we're to abstain from fleshly lust. 1 Timothy 6:9, we're to be away from foolish and hurtful lust. 2 Timothy 2:22, flee youthful lust because young people are tempted just to respond to hormones and feelings. They haven't matured to live with propriety and balance yet. 1 Timothy 6:11, we're to deny worldly lust. Those are things we put off after we're saved. Paul says, "Titus, now I'm writing to you because the grace of God's been manifested and it's been manifested among other things to a primary end that these church members in Crete begin to put off ungodliness and begin to put off worldly lust as the guiding principles and patterns of their lives."

Now the positive side, he said, "Now here's the things you can begin to put on under the grace that disciplines you, to live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age." Sensibly means a proper self-restraint. It means you walk through this life, as you go through this life, you're housed in this old, fallen sin body, this old, fallen, unredeemed humanity that the new you lives in, and that old, unredeemed sin package you live in always wants to sin. And soberly means, boom, you wake up and you think, "This is a path to nowhere. This is a path to ruin and dishonor to God and wreck to myself, my marriage, my home, my children." So I want to wake up and think sensibly. It's actually the idea of sober and turn from the stuff that's ruining and wrecking me and dishonoring my God and walk with my Lord. That's sensible thinking. You remember, we talked about this a lot. Um this is a word, for example, that Paul uses a lot in chapter 2. Remember back up in chapter 2, verse 2, he says, all men live sensibly. In chapter 2, verse 2 verse 5, he says, older women teach the younger women to be sensible. In chapter 2, verse 5, he says, young men be sensible. The idea here is that live according to the wisdom and knowledge that God has now given you as a child of God.

Live righteously is the next thing. Righteously here in verse 12 is the idea of your relations with your fellow man. Be honest. Be upfront. Don't take advantage. Swear to your own fault and changeth not. Live sensibly. By the way, I gotta go back and pick

this up. Sensible literally has the idea of don't lose your mind. As a child of God, don't have a lifestyle that looks like you've lost your mind. It's in other words, like somebody could come up with you and your your heart and your ambitions and your drives going down this way toward the worldly lust and toward ungodliness and another Christians that looks at you and says, "Have you lost your mind!?" That's a that's a good interpretation of the text and that's a grace favor that the Holy Spirit screams that out at you, the word of God screams that out at you, and if necessary, a brother or sister in Christ who loves you screams that out at you. "Have you lost your mind? You're not thinking soberly and sensibly. The God of all wisdom has enlightened you to understand what's really true and what really matters, and you're still living like you don't know who He is or what He says." Brothers and sisters, you're not finished because I yell at you for 45 minutes on Sunday. You're gonna live like you haven't lost your mind. Sensible, that means be biblical. Be biblical.

Then righteously, we talked about that. That's just relations with our fellow man. He said we need to do all of this and then live godly, i.e. live according to the nature and wisdom of God, i.e. what's revealed in Scripture. You wanna know how to live as a wife? Look at Scripture. You wanna know how to live as a husband? Look at Scripture. You wanna know how to raise your children? Look at Scripture. You wanna know what your priorities and purposes ought to be? Look at Scripture. That gives you the nature and wisdom of God. If you do not do that and you've been born again, you are a fool living like you've lost your mind. You okay? It's wearing me out to preach to you this morning. But I wanna do this too, church. I wanna live this.

Verse 12, he says, in this present world, live sensibly, uh live righteously, live godly in this present world. Galatians 1:4 reminds us, "who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age." You see, that's what God's doing, he's progressively rescuing you from the old worldly desires and ungodliness that just has crammed on you, pushed on you, infiltrated you, mashed in on you as you live your life in this world. He wants to rescue you from that, "according to the will of our God and Father." Our former pastor used to say, "Don't think you can just come in and sing holy, holy, holy on Sunday and live and live helly, helly, helly all week long." Do we fail? Yes. Do we stumble? Yes. Do we fall? Yes. But we humble ourselves immediately and say, "God, I'm such a fool. That's just like me, God. That's why You died on the cross, because that's just what I am. Now, God helped me to get up and do an about face and get back on the road of discipleship, to take off those negatives and continually keep putting on the positives."

This present world he's rescuing us from is marked by ungodliness. We should not fit in down here. We should not flow with this world, and and can I say this, church, are you listening this morning? There was a time when generally speaking the church could say our culture's values are pretty much church values, pretty much. That age is over. That age is over. We did not become a subculture. We did not become a little sect of people who are over here kinda against everything. We've just stayed with the book and the world has gone to hell. So it makes us become a subculture and that's okay with me, I'm staying with you. Wherever Jesus is, that's where I'm gonna be. If that means I'm weird,

then I'm weird. If that means the world says, "Well, you're the outscourings of the world," then I'm the outscourings of the world. If that means the world says, "We consider you as sheep to be slaughtered, and you're the problem in this country," then let them call us the problem in this country. I'm staying with the word of God in Jesus Christ. We haven't moved. The world moved. And God help us as your pastor, we are not gonna modify this church according to the world's dictates and expectations. We're gonna be loving, we're gonna be kind, we're gonna be gracious to all men as best we can, but we will not move from the faith once for all delivered to the saints and that includes our purpose and pattern to be in this discipleship, taking off the negatives and putting on the positives as we live out our life because God gave us divine favor to want that and to be able to do that. It's an essential part of the total package of salvation.

Well, thirdly, III. Boy, I'm skipping a lot of stuff. The grace that motivates. Some scholars, when they get to verse 13, they like to say, and and I agree, it could be preached this way, fine. He said grace appeared in verse 11, glory appears in verse 13. There's some good in that. The problem is the glory appears because of grace and when grace appears, there's gonna be glory so they're kind of intermingled altogether.

"Looking for, "verse 13, "looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." So that's the grace that motivates. In grace, he has given us an understanding that Jesus is coming back. Hey, guess what? When Jesus comes back, there'll be no more ungodliness. When Jesus comes back, there'll be no more worldly lust. And I've said this to you before, but I'm going to say it again and I know what people mean when they say this, and I agree with the basic premise of it, "Jesus is the answer for the world," they will say. That's not really true. Jesus isn't going to fix this world. He's getting rid of it. He's not fixing it. He's right now saving people who will be a part of the new eternal creation, the new creations in Christ Jesus, 2 Corinthians 5:17. He's now building his new creation. He's housing them in local New Testament churches. They're to be progressive progressing in discipleship. And then when he returns, he'll get rid of everything else except his church and himself. The present heavens, the earth will pass away. He's not fixing it. He's throwing it away so you better get in on the new creation. If you're saved, you're part of the new creation he's building right now.

So he says, be looking forward to that coming, looking forward. It contains it contains an expectancy and an eagerness to welcome Jesus Christ. And Paul says it so well about his own struggle and wrestling with the flesh and in this ungodly world, where in Romans 7:24 and the first part of 25, Paul says, "Wretched man that I am, wretched man that I am, who will set me free from the body of this death?" He said, "I'm down here housed in this old, unredeemed, sin-loving body and I hate it. Not my brother, not my sister, it's me, O Lord." That's what Paul's saying, "It's me. But thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," that has to look toward forward to the coming of Jesus and the new glorification our bodies will take on. You know what heaven's gonna be? Heaven will be where you will finally serve Jesus perfectly and it'll be so much fun. And it's gonna be so pleasurable. God don't want you to miss out. God can't make sin to be lastingly pleasurable because God can't keep sin around if he shows up. So he's robbing you. He

he's stealing from you if he helps you sin. He's blessing you and helping you if he helps you overcome sin and be on this road of discipleship, this progressive revelation.

Now in verse 13, when we have the phrase, "the blessed hope," and how does he word it there, "looking forward for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." That could be three or four sermons right there. Really, the idea here, this is not two things, it's one big thing. Blessed hope doesn't mean our attitude of hope. We should have that. But here it means the joy in the arrival of Jesus. He is. The blessed the blessed hope is not in me necessarily. He threw it away. It he is the blessed hope. And really to understand the the verse, you should put the word "even" there, "the blessed hope, even," even, look at verse 13, "even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." It's a blessed hope because when he comes, it's full of goodness and benefits, boundless blessings for the children of God. When he returns in all of his glory, we will have completion, that completion that we hope for, where we all walk around like, "Wretched man that I am, who would deliver me from the body of this death? The old me I hate, the new me I want to control me, and often it doesn't control me and I have to repent again. But one day I'm gonna be complete when He returns. All my thoughts, all my motives, all my ambitions, all my affections, all my works will be perfectly pleasing to Him." Woo, what a day.

Completion for me, culmination for me, full of godliness that started at conversion. I should be progressing in down here in world and time and space history, but it'll be completed and culminate when he returns. Domination, he and his church will dominate everything that's left because he's gonna do away with everything else. When he comes, we'll be completed, we will be overjoyed, we will be vindicated. He says this is a powerful part of your motivation to continue on in sanctification, that is, progressing in discipleship.

He's our great God and Savior. On that day in his unveiling, his greatness will penetrate to the core of the earth and out to the corners of the universe. When he returns, every naysayer, every doubter, every critic, every spin-master, every underminer, every usurper that tried to denounce us, throw us into contempt, smear us, will be brought to absolute ultimate shame. And we will be vindicated. He says, let that motivate you to stay on track. "Well, pastor, I still sin." Well, don't sin long. Be a repent. It's like the little girl who had her little frilly dress on. She leaves church, it'd been raining, and she fell in a mud puddle. Well, that could happen, especially if they're kin to me, that could happen. But you wouldn't expect to show up next Sunday and she's still laying in that mud hole, would you? No, she should get up and get cleaned up. Mama clean her up, bring her back to church in a new dress the next week.

Well, the grace that secures us, I'm hurrying, all right? I know you can't listen long. Roast is gonna burn. Jesus may not return if you don't get to whatever you think's so important. I mean, I know you can't listen long, so I'm going to hurry. The grace that secures us, first of all, pardoning us, look at verse 14. He "who gave Himself to redeem us from every lawless deed." Gave himself means he didn't just give a gift, he gave himself. This is a voluntary sacrifice. He gave himself for us, a vicarious sacrifice that is for us in our place

he died. To redeem us, that's a purposeful sacrifice. From every lawless deed, listen folks, there's not one point of the law you ever have broken, you are breaking or ever will break that Christ doesn't pardon you for. Woo, that's a great pardon. Past, present, future, all pardoned in Jesus Christ.

Secondly, not only did he pardon us, he purified us and is now in time and space history purifying us, middle of verse 14, "and to purify for Himself." That's the purpose of his sacrifice again, to purify for himself.

And then thirdly, not only does he pardon us and not only does he purify us, but he possesses us. He possesses us. Have you ever been told that the purpose of God is to have a people for himself, for his own glory, for all eternity? You see, your salvation is a lot more about God than it is about you. Your salvation's a lot more about God than it is about you. It's about his glory, not about you missing hell. That's important, and God cares about that, but it's about him having a people where God can say, and this is an anthropomorphic expression, it doesn't fit God exactly, but where God can finally say, "Finally, I got Me a people, and they love Me with all of their hearts, and I love them with all of My heart. It took the death of My Son to get them that way, but I got Me a people now."

And right now, that people is your local church. I don't have time to explain all this, but your local church is even more important than your family. I'm not saying your family's not important. You shouldn't be devoted there. Scripture teaches that. But should your family not honor Christ, you must still honor Christ and serve him in a local church. Your spouse may forsake you for your faith, 1 Corinthians tells us, but the Bible, Paul said in that case, let him leave. You still stay with Christ and with Christ's people. Amen. You see what I'm saying? They came to Jesus and said, "Jesus, Your family's out here." He says, "Who are My mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters? They're the ones who did the will of My Father." It didn't mean he didn't love those half brothers and sisters. Half brothers, I guess you should say. It meant that when you balance it all out, I don't know what my family may or may not do, but once Jesus apprehended me, that's the center of my life. You may live long enough where you don't have any living family left hardly, but you can still be a part of God's church and serve God and have a family on the earth.

God is about having his own people for his own possession. This is the purpose of the redemption. This is the purpose of the pardon. This is a purpose this is the purpose of him purifying us because God can't have a people that are impure. There's a picture of this in the Old Testament, many pictures of it. But Exodus 19:5 says, "So then if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among the peoples." He said, "In one sense, I own all the people of all the world, because I made them, I'm their Creator." But he said, "Israel, you'll keep My commandments, My ordinances. You'll be My special possession." Aren't you glad, though, we're not under Israel's law, but we're under Jesus' grace? Because no longer are you God's people because you keep his commandments. No, no, no. You're God's people by grace who are learning to keep his commandments. Oh, my goodness. That's run-through-a-wall stuff

right there. That is glorious beyond compare right there. The question you must ask yourself as you have to do a checkup on your soul this morning is, "God, do I at least have the germ, the seed in me that wants to live for Him and honor Him and please Him?" That discipleship that is a part of our overall salvation.

We are a peculiar people, the King James says it. The New American Standard says people for his own possession. But the same kind of idea. In other words, our origin is not from earth, but it's from Christ himself. Our King is not a created king, but it is God himself. Our laws are not of this world, they are spiritual laws. Our weapons are not of this world, they are spiritual weapons. Our language is that not of this world, but of the citizens of heaven. Our apparel, our clothing is not out of this world, but his very own righteousness we are clothed with. Our diet is not of this world, we have food they know not of, our diet is the bread of heaven. Our works are not works of human energy and flesh, but they are mighty through God.

Zealous, verse 14 says, for good works. God says, "I want a people that are known to be zealous for godliness and righteousness and goodness in the earth. They look like they're Mine. They look like they belong to Me." I don't have to say this to you, but I'm gonna say it. Don't you think you can put on Jesus in conversion and not walk with Jesus in discipleship. No such thing in the Bible. Some of you need to do a serious checkup on your soul. Titus 1:16, in contrast to those who are purified, zealous for good deeds, he says to Titus in 1:16, "They profess to know God but by their deeds they deny Him." Their discipleship isn't up to snuff, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

"Now Titus, you're on the island of Crete." The island of Crete is a wild and woolly place, full of rebelling and godliness and immoralities, women in rebellion, a feminist spirit was strong. The men were lazy and undisciplined about being good models and and and mentors for the younger men. The younger men weren't sensible. They didn't know priorities. They didn't know how to balance their lives. That's all chapter 2, verses 2 through 10. I was gonna go back and go through it, but our time is too short and you can't listen that long. I know you. "Titus. Titus. Pastor Titus!" Paul says, "Are you hearing me? This is not a ministry, Titus, for the weak of heart. This is not a ministry for a boy. You're gonna have to be a man, Titus. Titus," verse 15, "these things speak. Titus, don't you back up. Titus, don't you cut the corners. Be a man of God. These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority or with firm command." I hope I've done that this morning.

"Now Titus, they're gonna find a thousand and one ways to disregard you. They're gonna come up with a thousand and one ways to smear your character. Remember what they did to Timothy? They thought he was too young. We can dismiss his words. He's a young guy. You know, he he don't get it yet." I used to get that in the ministry. "Well, he's young." And I'm still teaching the same stuff I taught 40 years ago because it's right. Hopefully with more wisdom and balance, but I'm still teaching the same stuff.

"Titus, speak and exhort, reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you. Let no one, if you will, despise you. So Titus," Paul says, "that's your marching orders. You don't

have a vote in this, Titus. There's no rebuttal necessary, Titus. I'm the Apostle Paul. You're my understudy. You're to do what I'm telling you to do and, Titus, here's the end of the matter: live right and be tough." It's gonna take it to pastor a godly church in an ungodly culture like America or like Crete.