

Intro: Some of life's most important gifts are wrapped in the smallest packages. Some of you are parents: Meet K. Grace. Some of you are newly married or about to be married: Engagement ring...

Just like some of life's most important gifts, some of life's most important lessons also come in the smallest packages. In Titus 2:11-15 we discover what could be argued as the most important truth anyone could ever receive. Paul is going to teach us that...

The Point: All of life is all of grace. (read text).... Pg. ____

**“All of Grace”
Titus 2:11-15
July 15, 2012**

I. Receive the grace of God that brings salvation for all people (2:11).

- This is one of the tightest and most theologically profound statements in the Bible. This is why we just memorized this (or tried to memorize this) as a church. If you have never memorized a passage of the Bible, this would be a great place to start. You can memorize v. 11, right now.
- “For the grace of God has appeared...”
- Grace is the unmerited favor from God... This grace busted on the scene in the person of Jesus Christ.
- As we heard earlier from the gospel of John: Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us. He appeared, and he is full of grace and truth. Now, from his fullness, we receive grace upon grace.
- This is most evidently seen in his salvific work. “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation”
- We all need grace. Why? Because grace gives us what we could have never earned for ourselves.
- When we could do absolutely nothing to save ourselves, God reached down in his grace to save us.
- We are completely undeserving of this grace. A true understanding of God's holiness and the nature and extent of our sin helps us understand the deep ocean of grace required to cancel the penalty of our sin and give us the righteousness of Christ.
- We are not well. Did you hear about the bench clearing brawl at the women's football game at Dilboy Stadium. That's right, our own Boston Militia, threw down with the D.C. Divas after they won the game in Somerville. Apparently the Somerville Police had to call for backup. We are not well. (Make it personal...)
- God's grace saves us from the penalty and reign of sin, the just wrath of God, eternity separated from God in a place called hell, and a life void of the ultimate purpose for which we were created, named to live for the glory of God. The cross of Christ saves us from missing out on the abundant life he desires to give us here and now, and eternal life forever.
- This is what the cross is all about. I know we see crosses plastered everywhere from buildings, to tattoos, to dangling on the chains of famous rappers, but let's make sure we understand what the cross is all about.
 - “God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - Substitutionary Atonement, Jesus absorbed the wrath of God, he satisfied it in our place...
- **Benefits of Salvation**
- **New Life (John 3:3)**
- **Redeemed (Rom. 3:24),**
- **Justified (Rom 3:24),**
- **Adopted [permanent intimacy w/ God as our Father] (Rom 8:15),**
- So what do we need to do to receive this grace? not a series of religious acts or good works. . . not go to church, not be confirmed or baptized, not enough prayers...
- Religion says, “I perform, in order to gain God's acceptance and approval.” The gospel says, “I'm accepted because of the gracious work of Christ, therefore I obey.”
- There are a lot of religious people in Medford, who approach God like that. God if I do x, y, & z, and say my prayers, and live a good life, then you will accept me. My performance will get me in with you. But the gospel turns that on its head.
- We are saved by grace, not because we have performed but because he has loved! There is no salvation apart from the radical grace of God.
- **“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)**

- I have talked to multiple people over the past few months that have reservations about salvation by grace.
 - There have been two primary objections: Objection #1
- 1) It is not fair for someone to receive grace at the very end of their life after living a despicable life?
- But doesn't this show that even though we understand we need salvation to be by grace, we really want salvation to be by our works. They worked for it. They should be rewarded, but it's God's prerogative to save anyone, whether they are 10 years old or 90.
 - The same argument could be brought against God for saving murderers and addicts and adulterers. God, repeatedly in the Bible, saves the most despicable of people to demonstrate the riches of his grace.
 - By the way, if not for the grace of God, that could be you and that could be me.
 - Don't miss that this verse says that the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people. God's salvation extends to all people. He saves young and old, men and women, rich and poor, people from every nation on the planet! And this is one of the most beautiful facets of the gospel. No one is beyond the reach of God's grace!
 - There are probably people in your life that you think. Man, God could never change them. They are too far gone. They have done too much. Maybe, you even have those thoughts about yourself... God could never love me. I've done too much. I'm too far gone. Listen, the love and grace of God runs deeper and wider and higher and longer than we could ever dare to imagine.
 - **Brennan Manning** said: **"I could more easily contain Niagara Falls in a teacup than I can comprehend the wild and uncontainable love of God."**
 - Objection #2
- 2) If salvation is by grace, then it does not matter how I live my life.
- sin so that grace may abound (get out of hell free card)...
 - Romans 6:1-2.... But we don't have to go to Romans 6 to see this, we just need to keep reading in Titus 2. Look at v.12.

II. Depend on the grace of God that transforms God's people (2:12-13).

- In his letters, like Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians, Paul typically provides doctrinal teaching as a foundation, and then moves to practical instruction that is built on the doctrinal foundation. This time he flips the order beginning with practical instruction, and then provides the doctrinal foundation, but notice all of what he has said about godly living is still founded on and motivated by this doctrinal truth.
- Paul is advocating grace-motivated or gospel-motivated transformation.
- So let's make sure we understand something: Good works are not the root of our salvation, but they are the fruit of our salvation. In other words, good works flow as a result of a heart saved by God's grace. They are not the cause of God's grace to us.
- What Paul describes in vv. 12-13 is what we call sanctification. Sanctification is the process of becoming more and more like Christ.
- It is a *process*. It doesn't happen overnight... And it is *progressive*. We all have so much to improve. This is a lifelong process. Look down the road of your life. Think about where you will be. Think about WHO you will be 6 mos from now, 1 yr from now, 5 years from now
- Don't settle. Keep striving to grow in your pursuit of God and your pursuit of godliness. What greater pursuit could there be? Dropping a few pounds? Getting your fantasy football team ready? Watching every episode of your favorite tv show?
- How do we make this progress? By grace...
- *Testimony*: Accept Jesus by grace, and then go live for him by my own effort. At that point, it was up to me to my thing for God, to please him by my own effort. But I came to understand that I am dependent on grace not only for my justification but also for my sanctification.
- **"Command what you will, but give what you command." – Augustine**
- In other words, "God, you tell me to do whatever it is that you want me to do (love my wife, ok. Treat people with kindness, got it. Extend forgiveness. Be patient. Work hard. Honor you. Fulfill your mission. Commit to your people. Engage in good works. But God, if you're going to ask me to do all of this for you to point to how great you are, then give me the strength to do it! AND HE DOES!
- There is a religion of self-effort, and then there's the gospel. Performanced based religion will leave you tired, frustrated, and worn out.
- Trying to live the Christian life in your own strength is kind of like trying to travel across the country on a unicycle.

- How is a person saved? Grace. How is a person transformed? Grace. We are totally dependent on grace.
- It's not get saved and then you're on your own to live in your own effort and own strength. This is why so many people are not experiencing change in life. You're trying to do it yourself in your own strength.
- We see this all throughout Scripture!
 - **"I love you, O Lord, my strength." (Psalm 18:1)** (Memorize this)
 - **"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)**
 - **"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)**
 - **"For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me." (Colossians 1:29)**
 - **"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving." (Colossians 2:6-7)**
 - 164 in the NT it says that believers are "in Christ"
- Pic: Spiritual Breathing. "I can't. He can. I can't. He can."

So, how does this grace work?

1) It teaches us to say, "No!"

- The ESV reads, "training us to renounce.." The NIV says, "It teaches us to say, "No!"" Some other translations say, "denying ungodliness and worldly passions. The effect is the same. We are saying, We are done with that! We are going to do what it takes to give that which is contrary to God the stiff arm and turn from it,
- What is it that you need to renounce in order to embrace more of Christ? Pride. Pleasure (drunkenness, substance abuse, sexual immorality). Popularity. A mouth that constantly gets you in trouble. Shallow priorities.
- When your life gets caught up with God's best for you, then there are just some things that we do and won't do.
- The temptation will be to allow sin to die a slow death in your life. Slow deaths are never pretty. You feel me?
- **"Be killing sin or sin will be killing you." – John Owen**
- Typical of Paul's approach, he provides what we should deny first. And sadly, this where people stop and say, "Here's my problem with Christianity: it's just a set of rules, regulations, and restrictions. It only exists to tell me what I can't do." And you know what, if that were the case, I'd be right there with you screaming, "Don't sign me up for that." Thankfully, that is not biblical Christianity. That is the vision of life Jesus had for his followers and Paul understood that. That's why he continues in v. 12 saying that grace teaches us to not only renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, but also to live... to live. Self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age. So grace teaches us to say no but it also...

2) It teaches us to say, "Yes!"

- God loves us just the way we are, but he refuses to leave us the way we are. He wants us to grow...
- It's not enough to put off ungodliness, we must put on and say yes to self-controlled, upright and godly lives.
 - We all need self-control. Why? Because we will all desire that which is contrary to God, and that on a daily basis. So we are in constant need to practice self-control which happens by living under the control of the Holy Spirit at work in our life.
 - "upright and godly lives" refers to living life in a manner that is consistent with the gospel and reflective of the character of Christ.
 - Do you see what Paul is saying? We say no to pride, so we can say yes to humility. No to lust, Yes to self-control. No to jealousy. Yes to contentment. No to stealing. Yes to generosity.
- We do all of this "in this present age..." – The gospel is as relevant as your next breath. This verse highlights how the gospel transforms our lives today in a world that is most often contrary to God in this present age.
- **Check v. 13:** We live like this now, while we wait for that then. And what are we waiting for? Were you ready for that? "our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."
- Christ is going to return. Will you be ready? Listen, life is really short. Really short. I've met so many people who have told me, you know what I could buy this Jesus thing, and I think it's what I need to do, but I'm going to wait until this. Or this or that. ..

Trans: Receive grace. Depend on grace. Now, #3...

III. Be motivated by the grace of God to engage in the work of God (2:14-15).

- Huge verses here. Let's finish with a flurry... Why did Jesus die? The reasons were many, but here are a few:
 - 1) Purity: I think we've covered that.
 - 2) Possessed: Who or what do you belong to? The gym? Costco? Red Sox Nation? The MAF?
 - 3) Passionate for good works...
- Zealous... to make a difference. Zealous to reflect the character of God. Zealous to display the gospel to a people who don't have a framework for it. Zealous to....
 - This is why we try to do positive things in our community. We do this as a church as a whole (SN, CFN, Volunteers efforts w/ Local Partners, Circle the Square...)
 - We do this as individual Christians every day.
- Trans: Here's one final good work...
- Verse 15: Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.
 - Why we teach what we teach and why we teach how we teach.
 - Sincere. Humble. Loving. and with Conviction.
 - This is instruction for all believers. Listen, we do not advocate shoving Christianity down anybody's throat. If you have observed us in the community or been to some of our events, you've seen that. At the same time, if these things are true, it would be unloving to not tell people that Jesus has changed our life and he wants to do the same for you...

Conclusion:

- Do you know the grace of God? Are you experiencing the grace of God on a daily basis?
- We have to learn this truth! **"The gospel is not the ABCs of the Christian life. It's the A to Z."** - Tim Keller
- Some of you need the ABCs of the gospel (Admit, Believe, Commit). All of us need the A to Z...
- This is why we boast in the cross.
- We are going to meditate on the work of Christ on the cross by partaking of communion.