

## THE STORY OF SALVATION

"For the grace of God which brings salvation for all men hath appeared, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present age; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness, and might purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:11-14.

We shall seek to analyze these wonderful words and glean from them some of the glorious things God wants us to know about His matchless grace. There is nothing in all the universe comparable to His marvelous grace.

Our text clearly sets forth some tremendous truths about the glorious gospel of grace. It is not concerned with doctrine versus life or life versus doctrine, but it does teach that there may be the right kind of a life, and that such a life grows out of sound doctrine. In the Bible, doctrine is never separated from life, nor faith from practice. It is duty that springs from the doctrine, answering to it and influenced by it. There is no divorcement of Christian doctrine and Christian doing, or between faith and works. According to Paul, duties are always based upon doctrines, creed determines character, and belief is expressed in life.

Salvation implies that man was lost, and so lost that he could not save himself. Man did not deserve salvation. Neither did he solicit it. It was entirely the result of divine grace. The grace of God made all the arrangements necessary for salvation, devised the astounding plan, determined the means, and fixed the time. It provided the author of salvation. It brought the message of salvation. It presents the application of salvation to the soul. Nothing can take the place of salvation. With it there is heaven. Without it there is hell.

In the New Testament, grace refers to that in God which makes Him love the loveless and strive to help the helpless. Grace is the putting forth of God's power for the good of mankind, and the motive for it is mercy which is born of love. It is not the outcome of human merit. Whatever good it confers is undeserved. Grace is the original cause of all the blessings we receive from God. We are called by His grace, justified freely by His grace, sanctified by His grace, and kept by His grace.

### I. The Revelation.

#### 1. The Cause of It.

God's grace is the cause of this revelation. In this world, men will never be able to understand the full meaning of the word "grace". It is a word which characterizes the attitude of God toward men. It is a word which is as deep as the deepest sin, as broad as the measure from east to west, and as high as the throne of God. In substance, grace represents what God can do for a poor sinner who has sunk to the very depths of sin. He lifts him out of the depths and removes his sin from him as far as the east is from the west, and presents him faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Grace is God's everything bestowed upon those who merit nothing. It is love for the loveless and help for the

helpless. All of the goodness, love, and mercy of God are crowded into that little word.

## 2. The Content of It.

Incarnation is one element of this revelation. Our text informs us that the grace of God hath appeared. It does not tell us that it awoke or sprang into existence, but that it appeared or was made manifest. Grace for sinners dwelt in the heart of God from the beginning, but it was a secret hidden from the world until it was brought to light by the incarnation of Christ. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men" appeared when Christ Jesus came into the world as God incarnate in the flesh.

Substitution is another phase of this revelation, as shown by the clause, "Who gave Himself for us". Christ gave not merely His thoughts, time, and help, but He gave Himself personally, voluntarily, and sacrificially on our behalf. He gave Himself to die for us. What more can any man give than Himself? Never was there such a story as that of Christ giving up the glories of heaven in order to come to this earth to give Himself for us.

Redemption is another part of this revelation, as shown by the purpose clause, "that He might redeem us from all lawlessness" or iniquity. Redemption signifies deliverance by the payment of a ransom-price. Christ died for us in order that He might deliver us, not from poverty, affliction or death, but from all iniquity--its guilt, condemnation, power and consequences.

Purification is another purpose of this revelation, as shown by the expression, "and purify unto Himself." Christ Jesus came, lived, wrought and died in order that He might redeem and purify us unto Himself.

Separation is another idea set forth in this revelation, as shown by the expression, "a peculiar people". God does not want an eccentric people, but He does seek for a people whose essential singularity lies in the fact that they are His personal possession and reserved for His own use. The Lord uses us, not because we are great and gifted, but because we are clean.

Fruitfulness is the climax of this revelation, as expressed by the phrase, "zealous of good works". This means not only approving good works, speaking for them, and even practising them, but boiling in our desire to do them. Good works are those which are done by the children of God, in obedience to the commands of God, for the glory of God, and for the welfare of mankind.

## 3. The Consequence of It.

Salvation of human souls is the consequence of the revelation of the grace of God. Salvation means deliverance from the guilt of sin, the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and eventually the presence of sin. To be saved is to be forgiven, and to have the power of sin broken. From beginning to

end Christianity is all of God's grace. Grace is its alpha and its omega, its root and its flower, its lowest foundation and its topmost pinnacle, its starting-point and its goal. Had it not been for the grace of God salvation would never have come within our reach. No merit of ours ever called it forth, and no work of ours will ever entitle us to receive it as a reward. The grace of God delivers us from sin and its consequences, restores us to the favor of God and to communion with Him, and preserves us amidst all the dangers and temptations of this present life until we reach the heavenly home. Nothing else in all the world, except the grace of God, can bring salvation. People are terribly mistaken when they think a good life can bring salvation. They are going to be disappointed if they are counting on their kind and charitable deeds to save them. The stains of sin are so deep that they cannot be removed by human effort. Grace is the only means by which salvation is possible for man.

God's marvelous grace has provided salvation for all, and made it available to all classes--rich and poor, educated and uneducated, moral and immoral, noble and ignoble--and to all ages. The grace of God knows nothing of race, country, or clime. It has appeared for the benefit of all men. It offers salvation to all who will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. God makes no exception, and excludes none except those who exclude themselves. While Paul says that this grace brings salvation to all, he does not say that all receive the salvation which is brought to them. He does not describe an actuality, but a potentiality and a possibility. If the grace of God does not bring salvation to any man who hears the gospel message, it is because he will not receive the gift which that grace brings to him. This salvation is adapted to all, is revealed for the benefit of all, and must be proclaimed to all. Every saved person has the forgiveness of sins, peace with God, and eternal life. All the unsaved need and may have these priceless treasures.

## II. The Results.

### 1. Learning from Christ.

God's grace not only makes possible our salvation, but it also instructs and disciplines us. The expression, "teaching us," implies that we must learn. It is a scholastic term, and has to do with the education of children; not merely the teaching, but the training of them. The grace of God has come to be a schoolmaster to us, to teach us, to train us, and to prepare us for a more developed state. After we have been born into the family of God, we must be learners or disciples of Christ. He said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30. We learn from Christ through the Holy Scriptures, prayer, meditation, reading, conversation, godly teachers, and various daily experiences. And the grace of God schools us to live in a certain way.

### 2. Living for Christ.

Christ instructed His churches to teach their members, who are His disciples, "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The purpose of our learning from Christ is that we may live for Christ, as we should.

This gospel of grace insists upon an inseparable connection between creed and conduct, or doctrine and life. Therefore, our learning must be translated into living. "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present age."

Christ gave Himself for us in order that we might truly live, both here and hereafter. And the life He purposes that we shall live here has both a negative and a positive side. From the negative viewpoint, there are some things to deny or to lay aside. They are ungodliness and worldly lusts. These expressions are an epitome of all that is sinful and wrong in human life. Ungodliness, which must be abandoned, begins when one declines to live for God. An ungodly person is one who simply thinks, speaks, and acts without any reference to God; one who does not consult Him about anything. Every man who has the grace of God in his heart will think much of God. God will enter his calculations, God's presence will be his joy, God's strength will be the basis of his confidence, and God's glory will be the chief end of his being. After teaching us what we are to cease connection with, God's Word here instructs us what to do. Viewing the text from the positive standpoint, we observe that it says, "We should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present age." That is a clear and simple way of setting forth the duty of the saved to themselves, to others, and to God. Christians have an obligation to themselves--to live soberly. They have an obligation to others--to live righteously. They have an obligation to God--to live lives consistent with His glory. We are expected to live thus here and now.

### 3. Looking for Christ.

"Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." There are two appearances of Christ, the one in grace and the other in glory. Christ is the means of making the grace visible, and He will be the means of making the glory visible. And these two appearances are connected in such a manner that the former is evidently incomplete without the latter.

What is meant by "the blessed hope"? It is the hope of Christ's second coming in glory, that hope which is the joy of life, the strength and the comfort of every instructed Christian soul. It is the hope that when He comes again we shall rise from the dead, if we have fallen asleep; and that, if we are alive and remain, we shall be changed at His appearing. Our faith in the absolute certainty of His second coming is based on the testimony of the Word of God. We have accepted the promise of His return in implicit faith, and are awaiting it expectantly. We have found the hope of His return to be a living hope, a glorious hope, a purifying hope, a blessed hope, and a comforting hope. It is also a great stimulus to victorious living and to Christian activity.

If we really know our hearts aright, we actually want to learn from Christ, to live for Christ, and to look for Christ, while we are here between His advents of grace and of glory.

Many of us know that salvation is a gift, because we have accepted it as such and have been saved. Is there one listening to me who has not accepted salvation as a gift from the Saviour? If so, you are not saved. You will never have a better time to accept this gift than now. Won't you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ now and be saved.