

Godly waiting
Titus 2:11-14

Again, it is a real privilege to be here and to share God's Word with you.

Pray.

If you were here last week, I don't know how you felt as you left.

The bar is set very high on how the Christian is to live:

- Older men - are to be v2
- Older women - are to be v3
- Younger women - are to be v4-5
- Young men - are to be v6-7
- In the workplace - you are to be 9-10

That's really hard, actually it is impossibly hard, and Paul anticipates these feelings amongst the first hearers.

Just when we count the cost, and it all seems too hard for us....

....the Lord steps in and shows us how it works. And what what we will see in the verses, is that our

confidence as Christians will stem not from us trying harder, but understanding what God has done for you and is doing for you now.

Can I give you the big picture first? And then we can dive a bit deeper.

Two grace gifts

Two epiphany's (appearing)

In the NIV - v11&12a

Grace is underserved, unmerited favour - it is a free gift from God.

We are told that your salvation is a gift from God, that is you putting your trust in Jesus and his death on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins....

....is in fact God initiated and God given.

But he also says that it is the same grace that teaches us to say:.....v12

Isn't that a wonderful assurance for us this morning? God is freely giving you the grace gift to be changing your life inside out.

If you are tempted to say: the bar is set too high, I can't do it - at one level you are quite right, you can't do it.

But! Remember this, it is the same grace that rescued you, that now by God's purpose and gift, helps you to say no to....v12

Never separate these grace gifts.

2 grace gifts and
2 epiphanies (appearing)

V11 - Jesus first appeared to bring salvation
But he will come again v13

Just as Jesus has come - so he will come again, to bring the Christian home.

Why is that important here?

As we live between these two 'comings' of Jesus. I am to learn a very important lesson about our walk with Jesus:

- I am not perfect now and I must not pretend that I am
- I do not give up now for the Lord is committed to changing me to be ready for heaven.

If that is the case, then this tells me something very important not only about the character and the love of God, but also his purposes:

He is committed to two things:

- Rescuing underserved people
- Teaching us to live differently

These four verses are so rich in these two themes, the grace of God that has saved us through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the same grace:

- that convicts us
- shows us what to say no to and what to say yes to.

We have seen it in 11-12, again in 14.

Let's have a look at these two things that God is committed to doing that make up his plan and purpose for us:

1. God is committed to rescuing underserved people

Salvation literally means rescue. It may be stating the obvious, but before someone can be rescued, they need to be in some kind of danger or trouble.

And the danger that the whole of the human race is in is: we are cut off from God because of our wickedness v14.

How did God buy/bring us back? By the death of Jesus. Meditating on that helps me understand two truths:

- I am highly significant in the eyes of God, and
- He wishes me to be his friend to set his love/favour on me – which is amazing.

But he does this knowing exactly what I am like – he persists even in the face of my rebellion.

John was 10 years old and he lived by the sea. John loved boats.

And one day when John was given the most amazing present! It was a box, and inside the box were all the bits to make his very own boat.

Over the next few weeks John spent every spare moment he had making his boat.

He carefully fixed the sail to the mast. He painted it all shiny red. And last of all, very carefully, John carved his

own name onto the bottom of the boat. It was his very own boat that he'd made all by himself and he loved it very much.

Well the next day John carefully picked up his boat and carried it all the way down to the sea – he was going to sail it for the very first time.

John walked up to the water's edge trying not to get his feet wet and carefully placed it on the water – it floated perfectly! He stood back and watched his little boat bobbing up and down in the water.

Then a gust of wind came and John's boat began sailing along on the water – it was brilliant, John's very own sailing boat.

But as he stood watching his boat, John saw something. He stopped smiling and suddenly he was worried; you see John's boat was sailing away from the shore.

John watched, his boat, the one he made, the one he loved more than anything else was going further and further away until he couldn't see it any more, it was lost.

John went home very sad that night. He couldn't sleep; he just lay on his bed thinking about his boat.

Well days and weeks went by, but John couldn't forget about his boat, the one he made. And one day, as he was walking down the high street something caught his eye.

There was a little second hand shop on the corner and in the window was a boat.

The paint was all scratched off, the mast was broken, the sail was ripped and there was a hole in the side, but John would recognise that boat anywhere.

He ran into the shop and grabbed it from the window, and as he turned it over, carved into the bottom was his name.

Well John didn't wait. He ran all the way home and up to his room. He smashed his piggy bank on the floor, picked up all the money he had and took it back to the shop.

He paid the shopkeeper and bought back his boat.

As he held it in his arms he looked at his boat and said; “Now your mine twice over – I made you and I bought you”.

Over the next few weeks John fixed the broken mast and put a brand new sail on it. He carefully mended the hole in the side, and once again painted it shiny red.

And when he'd finished his work, John's boat, the one he loved, was just how he'd made it to be.

That's what is going on in these verses.

- God made you, carefully, purposefully, uniquely
- We drifted off
- BUT he found us, redeemed us and made us his again.

Jesus sacrificed himself for us, taking the full punishment which our sins deserved.

God is committed to rescuing underserved people.

The gospel is very radical isn't? Could you ever have dreamed up anything like that? No!!

Here is the real punch, the kick.

The Grace that saves – is the grace that trains

God is not only committed to rescuing people – he is committed to teaching us to live differently.

And what makes that radical is that when our salvation really begins to take root then we start living differently.

2. Teaching us to live differently

Paul's illustration and application of this is v1-10

God is committed to changing us by v12...

And this will be done when his word is taught.

It is the dominant line through these verses:

2, 3, 7, 9

It is a strange paradox that God's guidelines for godly living are on the one hand very attractive to Christian and non-Christian alike...

..and also rejected and despised when lived .

Who wouldn't want older men to be temperate and dignified, worthy of respect, and showing wisdom and love?

Who could not be drawn to the idea of a devoted, pure young woman who has been taught to love her husband and children by an older woman?

Who would not want young workers to be respectful, hard working and trustworthy?

Or be in the company of self-controlled, upright young men?

Our society longs for a set of values like this and yet, perversely, when offered them – refuses to live this way.

And when the grace that trains begins to take effect and we live this way – we are ridiculed.

We find ourselves in conflict with our workmates or even family, when we choose to act honestly, when they are happy to abuse the system.

We are scorned by our peers, when we choose purity over license...

....and uprightness over shame.

The gospel is very radical – the grace that saves is amazing enough – but the grace that sets to work on us, and change us – train us is equally radical.

Because it sets us against everything we would naturally do and how the world lives.

Which for many Christians be too much and so, they create the gap.

Here is the person who would want to trust completely in the forgiveness of sins through Christ's death. Absolutely no doubt that is the way of salvation.

But that need not impact on our lives now in any way whatsoever. I am free to live as I please. I will become a Sunday Christian!

I have become convinced that our heavenly Father makes no distinction whatsoever.

He is committed to rescuing underserved people, and teaching us to live differently.

Our response must be the same, the authentic sign that I have accepted this grace of salvation will be that I be ruthless in living God's ways.

Which means if I am lacking self-control – I must repent and seek God's help

If I am not loving Mary as I ought - repent and seek God's grace to change me.

If I am struggling in the area of temptation towards the opposite sex, towards money, envy...

...then I am to repent and seek God's grace to change me.

When we are caught in the current about 100yds off the beach and the lifeguard appears and drags us onto his boat, what happens next?

We don't ask to be thrown back, nor do we expect to spend the rest of our lives on the boat.

We head for the beach to begin a new life, a life in which we might be more careful about where and how we swim.

Our salvation is not an end in itself, it is but the first stage in a whole new life, a life lived for God rather than for ourselves.

