

Title: God's Grace for Godliness and zeal

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The Gospel; not Moralism

Titus 2:11-14 ESV ¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and **Godly** lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are **zealous** for good works.

Grace trains us

Titus 2:11, 12

- to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions
- to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives

Sound moral behavior apart from the grace of the gospel can lead us – ever so slowly – to self-righteousness, which is the enemy of the gospel.

Jesus gave Himself for us

Titus 2: 14

- to redeem us from all lawlessness
- to purify for His own possession a people zealous (most eagerly desirous of) for good works

It is the “energy” of grace that makes us “most eagerly desirous” for good works.

The place of good works – after grace – is essential

Mark 7:14-15 ¹⁴ And he called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him."

Colossians 2:21-23 NLT ²¹ You died with Christ and he has set you free from spiritual powers of this world. So why do you follow rules of the world such as, ²² “Don't handle!” “Don't taste!” “Don't touch!” Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. ²³ These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.

Matthew 23:26 TCNT You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup...so that the outside may become clean as well...

- Δ Moralism cleans the outside of the cup but leaves the inside dirty.
- Δ Believing the gospel cleans the inside and, as we walk with Christ in faith, the outside becomes clean.

Colossians 2:6-7 ⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Abounding in thanksgiving

- Thanksgiving is a manifestation of gratitude
- A lack of gratitude comes from a sense of entitlement
 - Δ If I am not thankful for what I have – even if it is only a little – I won't be thankful for the much I have, if I ever get it!
- Embracing the gospel kills entitlement
- I must know that all I am entitled to is HELL

Here's our wrong process

- The gospel is ACCEPTED
- The gospel is ASSUMED
- The gospel is CONFUSED
- The gospel is LOST

What this means is

We are converted by the astonishing hope of God's grace and love for the undeserving...

but we lecture on behavior, assuming those we are lecturing have heard what we heard, embraced it, and have been converted as well.

We need to teach behavior, right living, and morals.

But we need to teach these to people who have heard and embraced the gospel of salvation.

What is the gospel of salvation?

- The gospel is not us being good so God will like us; it is God loving us despite our sin and lawlessness. All we really need is need
- The gospel is not us showing God our good marks/report card. It is Jesus living a perfect life and giving us His good marks as our own
- The gospel is not us emptying our bank accounts to give to God; it is God pouring out His riches on us, the morally bankrupt, to make us rich
- The gospel is not us cleaning up our acts or our families or our relationships or our mouths; it is God cleaning them up for us.

The gospel is like a two-sided coin

- We were more wicked than we ever dared admit, and we are more loved than we ever dared imagine.
- In other words, we were in such a dreadful condition that the death of the Son of God was our only cure, and His love for us was so great that He died for "the joy set before Him" – and that joy was us!

When we can admit that we are really no better than anyone else and that we are incredibly loved by God, then - and only then – will we be able to love those around us who don't live up to our moral standards.

AND, we don't perfectly live up to our moral standards either!

The good news is revealed in His

- Birth
- Life
- Crucifixion and Death
- Resurrection
- Ascension

Δ Christ's crucifixion is the HEART of the gospel

Δ His resurrection is the POWER of the gospel

Δ His ascension is the GLORY of the gospel

- Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory (conciliatory) sacrifice to God for our sins
- It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases His holy wrath
- It also demonstrates His mysterious love and reveals His amazing grace.

Our Response to the Gospel

- The proper response to the gospel is FAITH in the person of work of Jesus Christ, a faith that is naturally accompanied by repentance from sin.
- Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life
- Saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service or works
- While repentance nor works save us, unless a person is willing to deny himself, take up his cross and follow Christ, he cannot become Jesus' disciple.

Our Inheritance through the Gospel

Salvation, the FREE gift of God is:

- Provided by grace
- Through faith
- Because of Christ
- For the glory of God

Anyone turning from sin in repentance and looking to Christ in His substitutionary death:

- Receives the free gift of eternal life
- Is declared righteous by God as a free gift
- The righteousness of Christ is imputed (credited) to him
- He is justified and fully accepted by God

Through Christ's sacrifice for our sin:

- An individual is reconciled to God as his Father and becomes His child
- The believer is forgiven the debt of his sin and, via the miracle of regeneration, is liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God's Spirit

But our tendency is to put the cart before the horse.

- To put works in without understanding His grace.
- To require morals of people who haven't understood His grace.

The bad fruit of this is moralism

- Moralism is a counterfeit! It is not the fruit of the gospel. Moralism is dependent on moral living to save us.
- Jesus' greatest enemies were moralists and some of His best friends were society's outcasts -sinners!
- Jesus said to the Pharisees in **Matthew 9:12, 13** "Healthy people don't need a doctor – the sick do...I came to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."
- Jesus wasn't saying that Pharisees were healthy and the tax collectors were sick.
- He said – in effect – that the tax collectors KNEW they were sick while the Pharisees, in their arrogance, mistakenly thought themselves healthy.
- The key difference between the sinners and the Pharisees was that the sinners KNEW they were needy.