

Sermon Notes on Tit. 2:11-14, Christmas

1. This is the only place in the Bible where the term "saving grace" occurs, vs. 11. The first sentence reads: "You see, the saving grace of God has suddenly appeared to all men." This text is fittingly appropriate for Christmas. The grace and kindness of God caused God to send His Son as a human being for all people.
2. That first sentence begins with "you see" because it looks back to vss. 1-10 where Paul gives young pastor Titus instructions on how the older men, vs. 2, the older women, vs. 3, the young wives, vss. 4-5, the young men, vs. 6, the young pastor, vs. 7-8, and slaves, vss. 9-10, should live and conduct themselves. But that's not possible without the grace of God. And so Paul says "You see, the saving grace of God has suddenly appeared to all men."
3. Then he proceeds to tell Titus and us what this saving grace has taught us: a) To deny ourselves, vs. 12. That means to say no to our sinful selves just as Peter said "no" to knowing Christ. We're explaining the meaning of "deny." Vs. 12 tells us that this saving grace teaches us how to live in this present age. Then in vs. 14 we read what this saving grace says about our future. We are awaiting the blessed hope and the appearing of our glorious God and Savior, Jesus Christ. That of course means everlasting life. At this point we have already covered both the first and second coming of Christ, the first at Christmas, the second at the end of time. And so, in vss. 12 and 13 we are told that the grace of God teaches us how to live in this present age and that we have the wonderful prospect of the blessed hope and appearance of our glorious God and Savior, Jesus Christ. By the way, Jesus is plainly called great God and Savior.
4. It's not the Law that causes us to live a godly life. The Law shows us our sin. And after we've been absolved of our sin the Law acts as a guide to lead us in our Christian living. But the Law is never a motive in Christian living. Only the saving grace of God in Christ can do that.
5. Then in vs. 14 Paul gives the basis for all of this: Christ gave Himself in our stead to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for Himself a people which belong to Him, making that people zealous of good works. *to be* "In our stead" pictures Christ as our Substitute. He took our place. God made Him sin for us. II Cor. 5:21.
6. Vs. 14 covers the whole life of the Christian, his justification and his sanctification. Christ redeemed us from all lawlessness. The Lamb of God took away the sins of the world. And Christ is also the cause of our sanctification, our Christian living. The text says that He cleansed for Himself a people belonging to Himself, zealous in good works. This reminds us of thoughts like: "I am the Vine. You are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in Him bears much fruit. Because without Me you can do nothing." Jn. 15. Or think of Eph. 2:1-10 which tells us that though we were dead in sins Christ made us alive, forgave us and that now we are created in good works which God has prepared so that we should walk in them.
7. To summarize: The saving grace of God has sent Jesus Christ as a man to be our Substitute to forgive us all our sins and our Motivator to fight sin and to live in good works. All the while He reminds us that we have the wonderful prospect of everlasting life in heaven with Him.
8. Christmas is the best known festival and holiday of the calendar and also of the church year. Even those who do not believe in Jesus look forward to Christmas. They profit from the customs of Christians. They take a day off, exchange gifts and have a good time. But Christians know the true worth of Christmas, for the saving grace of God has suddenly appeared in Christ Jesus for our eternal future. See also 3:4-7.
9. Preach this text in such a way that every day is a Christmas for the people of God, a day when they remember the saving grace of God for their eternal future.

Sermon Outline on Tit. 2:11-14, Christmas

Theme: THE SAVING GRACE OF GOD HAS APPEARED TO ALL PEOPLE

Introduction: Merry Christmas! All people over the whole world stop for a moment today. It's the birthday of our Lord Jesus. We give each other gifts but we remember especially God's gift to all men. We greet each other but we remember especially how God has greeted all in His Son. Behind all of this is God's saving grace. His love wants none to be lost but that all should come to the knowledge of the Truth.

I-What this saving grace of God has done for us.

A-It caused Jesus, His Son, to give Himself as our Substitute, in our stead. Though He knew no sin, God made Him to be sin in our stead. Vs. 14 says that He gave Himself for us to ransom us, to buy us back, from all lawlessness, from all iniquity, from all wickedness. Look about you. What do you see? Lawlessness, iniquity, wickedness. God's Son actually bought us back from all of this with His blood. He took away the sin of the world. Jn. 1:29.

B-It caused Jesus to cleanse us for Himself, a people for Himself, people who are zealous in good works. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. I Jn. 1:7. Not only does He take away the guilt of sin. He also cleanses our lives of sin. Christians are still sinners. They feel their sins more than unbelievers feel their sins. That's because Christians have learned the Law of God which makes them conscious of sin. God promised: "Though your sins be like scarlet they shall be white as snow." Is. 1:18.

C-It caused Jesus to make us zealous of good works, vs. 14. He is the Vine. We are the branches. Jn. 15. The person who abides by faith in Him brings forth much fruit. See also Eph. 2:1-10. God has prepared good works so that we should live in them.

II-What this saving grace of God teaches us. See vs. 12. It teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness and worldly lusts. We still have sinful hearts and desires. We see so much ungodliness all about us. But the grace of God teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness and worldly lusts. God is not a God of unhappiness. He wants us to enjoy His gifts in a godly way. It is not wrong to have a good time at Christmas. But we must deny all ungodliness. It is not wrong for a man and his wife to enjoy sex between them. But we must deny all fleshly lusts, godless thoughts. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life are sinful. I Jn. 2:16. The grace of God in Christ teaches us to say "no" to these things. The grace of God teaches us to live soberly, justly and godly in this life. That means that we should always be in control of ourselves. The grace of God gives us self-control to drown our sinful flesh. The grace of God makes us live justly in a world of injustice. We should let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. When the world looks at us it should see more than us. It should see the grace of God at work in us.

III-The grace of God makes us fit to await Jesus' second coming. Vs. 13 of our text reads: "Looking forward to the blessed hope and glorious appearance of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." There is a connection between the first and second coming of Christ. His first coming gives us the blessed assurance that He will come again. The angels told the disciples at Ascension: "He will come as you've seen Him go." By the way, this vs. plainly says that Jesus is true God. This man is also God. He will rescue us from this valley of sorrows. He is preparing a place for us.

Conclusion: Merry Christmas! We sing songs and exchange gifts today because the grace of God has appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. He gave Himself completely for us. Now He teaches us to give ourselves to Him. And the best is yet to come, everlasting life.