

Here's a question for you: When Paul writes to Titus that *"the grace of God . . . is training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age,"* what period of history is he talking about? His words surely applied to the ungodly Roman world of his day, but 2,000 years later, we are still living **"in the present age."**

Titus was left on the Island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea to continue Paul's work. Already at this time, one of Crete's own prophets had said: *"Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."* (Tit. 1:12) Is our present day really any different?

Hardly a day passes without some awful news about child abusers and pedophiles, execution-style shootings of children and whole families. From Wall Street to your street, the lust for money grows, while many *who will not work* are "lazy gluttons."

Some who watch the news reports are encouraged to seek similar, sinful life-styles. Others content themselves that they are not like such ungodly and perverse people! Many are sickened by what they see, and believe that stiffer punishments are the answer.

Paul directs us to follow a different course *"in the present day."* In the first verse of our text he praises the **"grace of God that brings salvation."** Then Paul commanded young Titus to **"speak these things, exhort and rebuke with all authority."** To condemn evil, rebuke those who live in sin, and to proclaim God's **grace** is what we Christians are to be doing also *today*.

For if a person's knowledge of God is bent and twisted, his heart and way of life will be **crooked** too, as we see all around us. Only divine grace can save sinners from eternal death, as well as change their hearts to live godly lives. May we learn from Paul's words that

GRACE IS REALLY SOMETHING!

I.

Grace is something that "stoops" to grant a favor to the undeserving. The Hebrew word for grace is derived from a word that means to bend or *stoop down*. That's exactly what the almighty God of heaven and earth did when He *stooped to come down* to us in the person of His Jesus Christ.

This is what John tells us in the first chapter of his gospel: **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."** *Grace stooped all the way* down from heaven in order to reveal itself and **give itself** to undeserving sinners in the person of God's Son, Who is **"full of grace and truth!"**

II.

Not only that is **grace** something that **stoops**. **Grace is also something that substitutes!** John says that **"grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."** When Jesus calls Himself the **"Good Shepherd,"** in John 10, He says, **"the good shepherd gives His life FOR the sheep."** Shortly before He died on the cross He told His disciples: **"Greater love has no one than to lay down his life FOR his friends."** (Jn. 5:13) "Grace" is a word that many hear about, but few understand.

For sixty years a rough man idolized his Christian wife. A year after his dear wife died, he himself lay on his death-bed with bone cancer. He told his pastor that he would never see her again, because she was going to heaven, but he was not.

When the pastor asked why he was so sure he was going to hell, the man talked about his sinful life. He said that he had tried to follow the example of his wife, but he could not be good

enough.

Since the dying man was a life-long baseball fan, the pastor asked him: "if a pinch-hitter smashes a home run, does it count as a run for the whole team or not?"

"Of course," the man replied, "it counts right away for the WHOLE team because he is their pinch hitter!"

"Well," the pastor said, "Jesus, the Son of God, was our "pinch-hitter;" He obeyed all the commandments and was perfect before God *in your place and my place!* He did not suffer the punishment of hell on the cross for Himself, but *for your sins and my sins, and the sins of all his teammates – the whole world!* The Bible tells us that "**He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities"** (Is. 53:5 ff.)

"I get it now!" The man said. "Because of Jesus I can go to heaven!"

*You see, **grace is something that substitutes Christ IN THE PLACE OF sinners!***

III.

Grace is also something that saves! So Paul writes in v. 11 of "**The grace of God that brings salvation.**" This grace is greater than our disgrace, *whatever* our disgrace may be! For Paul writes in Rom. 5:20: "**Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more!**" Divine Grace is something that saves us because it is always **greater** than all our sins! As someone has rightly said, "Jesus saves from the **uttermost** to the **guttermost!**"

Grace saves because it comes from the Judge of heaven Himself! – From the holy God Who hates sin and punishes sin, and yet *stooped* to "become **sin for us**" (2Cor. 5:21) Grace is *something that SAVES* because it is not man's work, but God's alone!

IV.

Finally, Grace is something that teaches us to serve! Paul says in v. 12 that this grace also "*teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*"

The world's religions teach that man must **serve in order to be saved.** But Divine Grace teaches us that we **have been saved in order to serve!** Paul writes in Ephesians 2:10: "*We are God's workmanship, created in connection with Christ Jesus for good works.*"

Our "**great God and Savior Jesus Christ**" stooped and substituted to save us by *grace* so that we would be *gracious* toward others. *Grace is something that serves* others because "**we are looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great Savior!**"(v. 13)

The ungodly in our communities think that Christians lead dull and boring lives in the service of others! But the wicked and ungodly serve themselves and the lusts of their flesh because they do not know the **grace of God in Christ**, and have no hope in His **glorious appearing!**

We, on the other hand, who walk by faith because of God's **STOOPING, SUBSTITUTING, SAVING GRACE, live to serve** because we are "**looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great Savior!**" The apostle John says that "**Everyone who has this hope in Him (Christ) purifies himself, just as He (Christ) is pure.**" (1 Jn. 3:3)

Because **GRACE BOTH SAVES AND SCHOOLS US TO SERVE**, the Christian says:

"I cannot work my soul to save, For that my Lord has done;

But I can work like any slave for love of God's dear Son."

Have you come to the same conclusion I have? **Grace is really something** from our God, so that our God may be **everything** to us! And we pray that He could be everything to everyone! Amen.

