

THE ROADMAP

Titus 2:11-15

So whenever you are traveling somewhere new, you usually prepare for the trip by looking at a map and planning your route. You look to see which route makes the most sense: which route is fastest? How long will it take? When do I need to leave? What are the highway numbers or towns we'll go through? – that sort of thing. It's common sense to do that. But imagine not doing that – not having a planned route to take to somewhere you've never been – no map, no directions. You just leave town and drive around until you find it. But no one really does that do they? No one says to themselves, "I am going to take a trip to Nashville, Tennessee!" and then hops in their car, crosses their fingers, and just drives off in all directions, hoping they'll arrive in Nashville. To desire to go to a specific destination without actually looking at the map and having a plan in place to get there is extremely unwise. And yet when it comes to the most important destination that every man and woman needs to get to, their eternal destination, that's exactly what the many of people do. They just cross their fingers and hope that they'll end up in heaven when they die. They drive off in all directions when there's a perfectly good map right in front of them. So that's what we're going to be looking at today: a sort theological roadmap from God's Word that gives us guidance for our lives. Let's think about that as we read our text.

So as we resume our study this morning in the book of Titus, I remind us that our theme for this book is "A Church That's Going Places." It's a practical book. It's an active book. It's a book teaching believers to be animated – actively living for and doing things for the Lord. The term "good deeds" comes up several times in just these three little chapters. We are to be fit for good deeds (1:16), an example in good deeds (2:7), zealous for good deeds (2:14), ready for good deeds (3:1), we're to remember the proper motivation for good deeds (3:5), to be careful to engage in good deeds (3:8), and learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs so that we will not be unfruitful (3:14).

Paul started off this book with big thoughts about God's program (what He's up to) and how we need to be a part of it as a church and '**The First Step**' on this journey for these fledgling churches we saw was to appoint elders who could lead and feed and protect the flock (1:5-9). Paul wanted these gatherings of believers on this island of Crete to become organized and productive churches. Next, we saw how if they wanted to go places, these elders would have to **deal with these fake 'Roadblocks'** that the false teachers were setting up with their works-based gospel (1:10-16). Then in chapter 2, we saw how wherever we go on this journey, we have to be careful how we drive. All of us have this "**How's my driving?**" sticker on the back of us and we're to drive in such a way that we honor and adorn the Word of God.

Now as we come to 2:11, it sort of feels like we're in Google Maps and we're **zooming out** from our journey so we can get a better perspective on where we're at and which direction to go from here. And that can be helpful at times to do. Remember these churches needed direction – they were a little off the grid on this **island called Crete** and probably didn't receive the apostolic instruction that the mainland churches did. So they might be a little lost in regards to what God is doing now. So one of the first things that is helpful is to do when you're a little, trying to figure out the direction you came from, is you look back and find a **landmark** to go by. You look for your starting point. On God's roadmap we look back to Christ.

I. **LOOKING BACK TO THE FIRST COMING (VV. 11-12)**

Paul told them how to live in the previous ten verses and then you see the word "for" in v. 11. Basically here is the reason you should live this way – Because "the grace of God has appeared."

A. **Grace has appeared.**

That word “appeared” in the Greek is **epiphany**. When someone has an epiphany, they have a moment of sudden insight or revelation. Something dawns on them. That’s a perfect and biblical way to describe both of Christ’s comings. It’s sort of a surprise. 2 Peter 1 says, “we have the prophetic word made more sure to which you will do well to pay attention to as a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day **dawns** and morning star arises in your hearts.” Basically, give your attention to studying the word of God until His next dawning, when we’re glorified. Even some of the older, traditional churches celebrate His 1st Coming by calling it Epiphany (Jan. 6th). Paul says dawned was the incredible grace of God. Grace is always something undeserved and unearned but in this case it’s actually a Person we didn’t deserve. Paul is referring to Christ coming as the **Grace of God that appeared**. Everything that Christ is to us and represents is God’s grace and He brought something.

B. Grace brought salvation to all men.

And salvation is just a big, common Christian word that means **deliverance from sin and all of its consequences**. It is the act of saving someone. Kind of like in a superhero movie: a superhero often brings salvation to the world by stopping the bad guy. Well, Christ is the grace of God that *brought* salvation to the world through His coming – through His birth, life and death, He saves us. It was nothing we deserved but God did out of His grace. And that grace is something that He offers freely to **all men**.

In the ancient Greek and Roman world of literature and entertainment, the superhero “gods” like Hercules might show up and save a select group of people – a privileged people. But our text is saying, in light of verses 1-10, that He died for all. Paul gave instruction for older men, older women, young women and slaves. Basically, it doesn’t matter who you are, you can know Christ died for you. It doesn’t matter your gender, social status, race – there are no barriers to His offer of salvation. It’s actually really important that we don’t mess with what the text says here because doing so can subtly alter the nature of the gospel and God’s character. When it comes to the gospel we need to remember this:

❖ **The gospel is exclusive but it is also inclusive.**ⁱ

So first, when we talk about “the” gospel, we’re talking specifically about the message of the saving work of Jesus Christ that is good news for us – The gospel means “good news” – and is the fact that **He for our sins, was buried and rose again three days later so that everyone who believes has everlasting life**. That’s the gospel. And that is **an exclusive message** in the sense that it is the only message God has given us for salvation that we must believe. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life; which means there is no other way, no other truth, no other life. You won’t get to heaven or be forgiven any other way. In Acts 4:12, Peter was preaching and he said, “There is salvation in no one else [other than Christ]; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” It is exclusive in that sense.

However, it is also **an inclusive message**. John 3:16 teaches that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever believes will not perish but have everlasting life.” 1 Timothy 4:10 says, “He is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.” 2 Peter 3:9 says, “He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” So He died for all – not just for a few. That means God’s message is inclusive. His love extends to all. The offer of salvation is for everyone. On the other hand, **this doesn’t mean universalism** – universalism is the belief that everyone’s going to be saved and no one will go to hell no matter

what they believed. But we've already determined there is a condition to be met that keeps it exclusive – faith. Exclusive but inclusive.

One of the reasons Paul is emphasizing the grace-gospel message and reminding them of it is because of his emphasis on good works and good deeds throughout the letter. Paul wants the Cretan churches to grow in good works and good deeds but he does not want them to forget that those good works and good deeds are not what saves them because that's obviously very attractive to man's pride. It is the reason why religious systems are so popular. If salvation though was by our performance and our goodness and our religious works, then it wouldn't be by grace and Christ's coming to live and die for us would have been unnecessary. In 3:4 Paul says, "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we've done in righteousness, but according to His mercy [which was displayed in Christ]."

There's a third thing we need to know about God's grace in Christ and it's that...

C. Grace teaches us to live a godly lives.

So rather than what the false teachers were teaching, that godliness through ritual practices was the basis of salvation, Paul is teaching that works and deeds are actually the result of already receiving grace. It's the incredible grace of Christ that produces the godliness and obedient lives that the Father is really looking for. It is primarily God's grace in Christ that softens our hearts and gives us the proper motivation to do good. Romans 2:4 says it's God kindness that leads us to repentance. We grow to love God because we realize He first loved us and like Jesus said, when you love Him, you obey Him – and in a couple of ways:

#1 – In a **negative** sense, grace teaches us to stop doing certain things. It teaches us to **deny ungodliness and worldly desires**. The Cretans were known for being **ungodly** liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons (1:12). Ungodliness refers to more external behavior. **Worldly desires** are more internal like lust, hatred, anger, envy. A lot of people initially look at this and think it's sinful to enjoy things in the world. That's not what it's teaching. Paul taught against that ascetic idea elsewhere (Col. 2) and told us to enjoy good things God gave us and to thank Him for them. In fact, I don't think we enjoy this world enough! The desires Paul's talking about are the internal worldly desires, sinful longings.

#2 – But secondly, grace teaches us **positively** to start living another way – living sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, which is just the opposite of ungodly and worldly. To be godly is to be like-God. And in Titus 1:1, the very first verse in the book, we saw that Paul's emphasis on "the truth according to godliness." He's teaching us how to live in the present age. How to be godly believers, in an ungodly world. Paul is teaching here that when God's grace is understood properly, with God's big, **redemptive plan** in mind – you won't think to abuse grace. Those who think grace gives them a license to sin are ignorant to the overall redemptive purposes of God who is working to undo the Fall that began clear back in Eden. The first man and woman fell into sin and ever since, God has been carrying out this redemptive plan to restore things again. He's undoing the sin problem.

❖ **Redeem = means to buy back.**

When a slave is redeemed, he is purchased out of the slave market. For a Christian, it's like saying that Christ bought us back out of the slave market of sin. Here we were, shackled by sin, slaves to sin, and He came and like a superhero and saved the day. We were rescued! Now, why would someone who has been saved from that, willingly go back to being

oppressed by it. If you've been rescued from sin why would you ever go back to that? To willfully live in sin once you've believed is to work against God's redemptive plan for your life. This redemptive plan includes **three major experiences**:

- 1) Being freed from sin's **penalty** is **salvation** and considers the **past**.
The moment you come to trust Christ, you are declared righteous by God. Your position or standing before God is redeemed. The Spirit baptizes you, purifying you in His sight. You have been reconciled to God. This was made possible by His First Coming. But as we grow in Christ and become sensitive to the Spirit through the Word, we become freed from sin's **power**. He transforms us. Our lives literally begin to change.
- 2) Being freed from sin's **power** is **sanctification** (being set apart) and considers the **present**.
There is a visible and observable redemption and purification taking place in our lives. Ultimately though, we're looking to be freed from sin's presence at His second appearing.
- 3) Being freed from sin's **presence** is **glorification** and considers the **future**.
At that moment there will no longer be a war in us between flesh and Spirit. No worldly desires and the sin nature. We will be like Christ. Then our redemption and purification will be complete. This why I sometimes refer to our salvation as holistic.
❖ **Holistic** = means a reference to the whole. All the parts.
He's not just interested in saving part of us. He's not just interested in saving us from the penalty of sin. He is interested in seeing redemption in our lives now and even more to come. We'll talk more about the now part of it later but in v. 13 Paul looks to the future.

II. **LOOKING FORWARD TO THE SECOND COMING (V. 13)**

Verse 13: "Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." Again, there's more to God's redemptive plan to come that gives us the direction – somewhere God is going with all of this. It's a complete redemptive package. When Paul talks about **the blessed hope and appearing** of our great God and Savior, it seems apparent by the way he uses the same definite article that he's referring to the same event. So we could say that **the blessed hope is His appearing**. It's probably just a general reference to His Second Coming without getting into details. But what's going to take place as part of His next appearing that could be a huge hope for us to look for? Clearly the final phase of redemption – **our glorification**, when we get our resurrection bodies.

There is a moment coming, typically referred to as the **Rapture**, where Christ comes to get His people and gather them to Himself. I Thessalonians 4:13-18 it says He will come in the clouds and the dead in Christ will rise from the dead and whichever believers are living at the time, they too will receive their glorified bodies. He will transform our bodies, it says, in the twinkling of an eye, fitting them for heaven and snatching us up. Rapture meaning to be "caught up" or "plundered" or "seized by force". We will be caught up and meet the Lord in the air. At that moment we will be united with Him forever and united with our loved ones in the Lord forever. It is our blessed hope and Paul says comfort one another with this hope. That's the passage that say we don't grieve as do the rest who have no hope. It's not only our hope, it's Christ's promise isn't it? He said in John 14:1-3, "Do not let your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." He's going to come and take us to the Father's house. I'm excited for that! We are to be looking for this moment and praying "Maranatha," which means – "Our Lord Come!"

It's a terrible way to live, as an unbeliever with hope: to only see endings in your future. Many folks live by the idea that "you only live once." Eat and drink and indulge in the worldly desires because tomorrow, we die. Ever heard these lyrics? "Que sera sera! Whatever will be will be, the future's not ours to see. Que sera sera!" What a horrible way to live with hope. That's not the mindset of a believer. For the believer, there is no ending – only new beginnings that get better and better. Even death loses its sting.

❖ **The believer's future is one of hope.**

I like to say that the good ole' days haven't even started yet! We will be set free from this body of death and given a resurrected, immortal body. When He returns, the curse on creation will be lifted. He'll reign in righteousness. We also have the hope that one day we'll live on a New Heaven and New Earth even, where there isn't even any effects of sin. It's a totally recreated Heaven and Earth where God dwells with man forever. We have so much hope people! And it's not a wishful thinking hope – but **confident expectation** based on the First Coming.

Let's continue on now around **verse 14**, which says, "Our God and Savior, Christ Jesus [clear reference to the fact Jesus is God] who gave Himself for us..." So when Christ was crucified **it wasn't an accident**. It says He **gave** Himself. That reminds us of the sacrificial offerings from the Law, right? He gave Himself as a sacrificial offering for us to redeem and purify us. Before we even knew what we needed, He acted on our behalf. He gave Himself for us.

It wasn't accidental. **It was purposeful**. Here is the purpose: "...to redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." Let's think about that. He gave Himself to redeem you from all your lawless deeds that you've ever committed or might commit. And He gave Himself to purify you from all your sins you've ever committed or might commit. Your sins are paid for and you are washed clean. What grace! But is that all he's referring to? Our past salvation? I don't think so. Again, I think **the emphasis on the now in our sanctification**. How to live now, **in the present age**. If we're growing in godliness, there should be a **visible** redemption and an **observable** purification. Our lives should be changed!

And this is really neat to think about because many people think the Christian life is just about behavior and following lists of do's and don'ts and if you do well, you get in – do bad, you don't get in. But **think about what this is saying**. It's not teaching a performance based system at all. What is it that directs our behavior towards godliness? What is it that drives us the most right *now* to say no to ungodliness and yes to godliness? **Is it not the idea that He gave Himself for us?** Isn't it His loving-gracious-kindness towards us by offering His life for us? It's grace that teaches us. Ultimately we could say it's the loving-gracious and kindness in the GOSPEL! This truth is often missed. It's mainly the **perception of Christ's love for enables us to see our sinⁱⁱ** more than anything. What guides us on the path of godliness is the grace gospel.

III. **LOOKING ALWAYS TO THE GOSPEL (V. 14-15)**

If we want to stay on God's road and be guided by Him from First to Second Coming we've always got to look to the gospel.

❖ **The gospel guides us to godly living.**

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, "For the love of Christ controls us," That word control is a neat one. It's like it gives us restraint and compels us. Overall, guidance would be a good word. Kind of like a horse with bit in his mouth is restrained but guided. **A horse without a bit** runs wild and doesn't fulfill His created purpose. The gospel restrains us but also teaches us how to fulfill our redemptive purpose. Grace teaches us to go left when He says go left and right when He says go right. "For the

love of Christ controls us, having concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.” That’s just what he’s been saying all along. **The answer is the gospel.** The answer is to believe that He gave Himself for you that you who would believe would be transformed by that kind of love and grace.

The Puritans called this “the power of new affections”.ⁱⁱⁱ Our new affections for Christ become so much that they begin to replace the old affections for the worldly lusts. **We begin to want a close relationship with Him who loves us so much.** One of the illustrations the Puritans used is that of **the live oak** tree. The leaves on a southern live oak tree die every winter but they don’t fall off. What eventually forces these leaves off the is not the freezing cold or bashing winds (like we experienced this week), it’s the new life of the new leaves in the early spring that sort of forces out the old. That’s a good way to look at the life of a Christian who is comprehending the gospel – sure, the sin nature part of him wants to hang on to those old worldly desires but the love of God in the gospel begins to push out those old habits and create new desires. At that point, **the gospel is visibly and observably redeeming and purifying our lives. How awesome is this!**

Lastly, Paul tells Titus in **verse 15**, “These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.” Why would he say that? I can think of many reasons but two major reasons. One, because the legalistic and religious false teachers would come against this loving-grace gospel with a heavy hand and say, “Christ died, yes, but unless you keep our list of rules and rituals, you can’t be saved.” They are those who think they are on God’s road but aren’t. Titus would have to **stand for grace** against the legalists. But then on the other hand he would certainly encounter those whose complaint against this godly teaching would be, “You’re just trying to take away my Christian freedom! Don’t tell me how to live my life!” These are those who still love their own road more than they love God’s road. And so Titus would have to **stand for holiness** in this case. Sooner or later, **everyone has to make the decision to get on God’s road by looking to the gospel.** Only the gospel can save you from the errors of legalism and license and into that Spirit-filled realm.

Use your imagination a little bit this morning with me and think about the sightseeing there is to do on God’s road. On His road, when you look back, you see a monumental landmark of God’s grace. When you look forward, you see another giant monument of grace. If you look down at the road you’re standing on, you see a 6 lane highway paved with grace. It’s grace from one shoulder of the highway to the other. It is grace that guides God’s people, defined by the gospel.

ⁱ Bryan Clark, *Titus 2:11-15 sermon*, www.lincolnberean.org

ⁱⁱ Kent Hughes, Bryan Chapell, *1-2 Timothy and Titus: Preaching the Word series* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2012), 384.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.