

Grace

Welcome and Opening Scripture

Hymn: MP 449 Love divine all loves excellin (Mayhew) 4v split to 8v

Bible Reading: Ps 63

Prayer of adoration and praise.

Children's talk Smiting the Rock

Chorus MP 37 As the deer pants for the water

Notices BBQ thanks, midweek, Harvest prep bring food, Sat before. Give thanks for accommodation for Amin and Samuel. Chris membership.

Eliana-Jem dedication

Main reading: Titus 2:11-15, (page1199), Romans 6:8-14 (page 1133)

Hymn: MP 31 Amazing Grace

Sermon **Grace**

Hymn CH 688_732 Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross (video)

Close -----

Listen to today's sermon by clicking on the link at www.knbc.org.

The audio file is [21_09_12.mp3](#).



Welcome and pray

- Being weak with exhaustion or parched with thirst is a terrible experience. Has that happened to you? An Australian paper reported on a couple who ended up in the desert-like Outback. Away from their broken down car they walked around and became quite lost, not having any idea where they were walked on and on. The hot sun scorched them and they became weak for lack of water. They were found dead. For Australians it is an all too familiar story." The Australian paper recalls "They didn't know where the water was and walked to their deaths". It was too late when people found their dead bodies. What is so sad is that they were less than 10 minutes away from water.

Weakened by the lack of water with their lives ebbing away is how the people were in the desert when they came out of Egypt. They had been rescued from slavery and set free to love God – now were they to die in the desert? They needed to learn to look to Him for their sustenance and help. Many today are in a frantic desperate search life-saving help. As a Christian, x2 though weak - I find all I need x2 in the Lord who promises to provide.

✚ **What a double tragedy it is when the solution is so close.**

We are continuing in our series in the letters to Timothy and Titus, they are known as the pastoral epistles because they help by teaching us how to live the Christian life. They teach us where the help is - and how I can find it.

Many passages speak about how to enter the Kingdom of God, now here it's how to live in the Kingdom of God. That conversion experience, that moment of being saved was, as Paul discovered, just the beginning. So with us. Now we are to follow Jesus our new Lord and Master.

The passage we are looking at is Titus 2:11-15 and particularly the first verse **11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.**

This morning we consider what we as believers face, - what we need and where it is found – and what it does. So firstly

What a believer faces.

In the previous passage Paul was writing about how both men and women, the young and old, and those slaves or free, whoever we are, whatever place we have in society, are to live. How are we all to live this new Godly life? What is involved in following Jesus? If someone stopped you in the street and said "Ah the Christian life is an easy life" what would you say? "All you do is just meet up at church once or twice a week. – and as for the Pastor well he only works one day in seven what kind of cushy life is that!"

You know that is as far from the truth as it could be.

Jonathan Edwards, a Godly leader of the 18th Century said "the Christian life once started, once entered into - is a business of great labour and care".

- ✚ **There are many commands to be obeyed, many duties to be done, duties to God, duties to our neighbour, and duties to ourselves. There is much opposition in the way of these duties from without. There is a subtle and powerful adversary laying all manner of blocks in the way. There are innumerable temptations of Satan to be resisted and repelled. There is great opposition from the world and on every side snares laid, many rocks and mountains to be passed over, many streams to be passed**

through, and much flattery and enticements in this vain world to be resisted.

- ✚ Then there is a great opposition from within; a dull and sluggish heart averse to me doing all those spiritual disciplines that I should now do. Yes there's that proud, deceitful and corrupt heart so that I do nothing except by a most strict and careful watch. What great labour and strife!

Would you agree? Maybe you would add some of your own battles to this. Where can I find help to live this truly challenging life?

Secondly - What we need (Grace)

The answer is grace. And Grace come from God through Jesus Christ. x2

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

They were, as are we, no longer subject to the Jewish laws, all those OT laws given to Moses. No, now we are under grace, as John says **the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.** Joh 1:17

Perhaps we should define Grace – Grace is the free favour and good-will of God. It is not any merit or desert in me. There is no goodness in me. Grace is the word 'charis' in Greek, and that means 'gift' x2

As we saw the Rock in the desert was struck and water flowed. This was the source of life and strength for all who had it. Without it I die.

So too Christ was struck, On the cross he who had no sin became sin and was struck. He was struck, bruised, punished. This punishment was my punishment, the eternal punishment a just God must meter out to me, he took it, x2. **Christ was pierced for my transgressions, he was crushed for my iniquities; the punishment that brought me peace was upon him, and by his wounds I am healed.** Isa 53:5

Out of pure grace God does not impute my sin to me. We all deserve punishment, but Christ averted the judgment of God from me and appeased His wrath. Grace, therefore, costs us nothing, but it cost another everything to get it for us. Grace was purchased with an incalculable, infinite treasure, the Son of God Himself." **For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.** 2 Co 8:9

- ✚ With the barrier of my guilt cleared away - I can now receive Grace.

Just as water flowed from the Rock, so now with Christ's work on the cross complete Grace flows, it comes in abundance, it gushes, all that I will ever need. Christ's grace is life itself, for it is Christ himself.

2a

- ✚ To grow in grace you must first be in grace - in Christ.

If you have all you need then you will not be looking to Him. It is for those in need, those who are poor, those poor in spirit, if that is you then you find it. You have no righteousness of your own, - will you hunger and thirst for righteousness? – if you will - you will receive, you will be filled.

- ✚ The perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ is given freely to undeserving sinners by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. *John Knox on*

We heard about Paul's conversion and last week and saw what Paul did for the Lord, this is not to repay Him, but out of obedience to his new master, the fruit of a changed heart and changed mind. Wow what a life, maybe it made you think I could never be like that! I don't have the energy! I don't have the zeal, I don't speak as he did, or explain the gospel like he did, or I could never go through difficulties like he did. I could never forgive and show the love and patience he did... and so on. In essence you are saying "I can't live that life – Without Christ you cannot – no-one can. But with Christ you can you must. He is the One who works this miracle in me.

Paul said he couldn't do it. All of the most used men and women of God have said "I can't do it" But Jesus says "trust me" with me you can. "**My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.**" 2Co 12:9

In fact Paul even delighted in his weaknesses for it showed that what he did was actually Christ working in him **That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.** 2Co 12:10 Peter said of Jesus:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

2Pe 1:3

- Power like the BP oil rig fire in the Gulf of Mexico, really hard to put out because it was constantly being fed from below ground at high pressure.
- Car tank always on empty - Power from another source – the mark of a believer's life.

Thirdly - What it does

"11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. Grace for all believers. 12 It teaches

In other words it is designed to produce an effect, to produce change. It directs us what to shun and what to follow, what to avoid and what to do.

- ✚ The gospel is good news because it does something, it changes my me.

2b

Here are some key elements

12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

Firstly the gospel of grace teaches me to abandon my sins. Now with Christ's power I can win those battles and put away all that is ungodly, all unbelief, that neglect, my lack of love, my lack of trust in him, my lack of obeying his word as I should. I will not neglect or cheapen worship, nor will I profane His Name or His day.

What is it that needs to change? *Worldliness certainly, those fleshly desires certainly – Am I not constantly affected by the pull of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, in other words all sensuality and filthiness, covetous desires and ambition, seeking and valuing more the praise of men than of God; put away all these.* What are you battling with?

1. There are some who prefer to talk rather than listen. – is that you?
2. I have battles of the tongue. Last week I had a sudden pang of guilt when I said something without thinking – Lord help me speak your gracious words!
3. Then there is the constant need to reduce me, is there a lot of you in you? When it should be all of Christ – and not you
4. When you talk to yourself about how much to eat – does your body always win? Does it always win the comfort battles, and what of pampering, vanity?
5. Maybe the battle front is what you watch; cheap TV, or playing games and wasting valuable time. I look back and think of all the time I have wasted on different things and shudder. "Spend time like money" I used to say, no it is more precious than that.

The Christian life is a life of putting off - and putting on - it is a life of constant repentance. That is what grace does it enables me to repent and therefore it enables me to make progress.

✚ **No repentance means no progress in your Christian life. x2**

It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, Take a look at your life? - What is standing opposed to Christ reigning fully? In confronting sin Paul speaks about 'mortifying' the flesh that is killing it off, we are in the murder business. That means killing off me....

- George Verwer said: **The fear of suffering rebuke** clutches at most Christians, yet we need correction to avoid lagging in our discipleship. Christians must learn to speak to one another both in love and rebuke. Though we learn primarily from the Spirit of God, he may use a brother

or sister to teach us. Earnest disciples can expect God to speak through his Word, through prayer, and through the exhortations of a brother.

- God has given me, I believe, increasing grace to take rebukes, but it has taken years. I reacted like a rattlesnake to the first rebukes I got as a Christian. There's a great difference between a rattlesnake and a worm. The Bible compares Jesus to a worm in the treatment he received (Psalm 22:6). If you strike a worm, it wriggles or dies, but if you strike a rattlesnake, you are struck in return. How significant it is that Satan is described as a serpent!
- Our twenty-five reasons why the other fellow is wrong and we are right are always near the tip of our tongue. But our readiness or reluctance to defend ourselves is a measure of our spirituality. Let us implore God to make us unafraid to receive rebukes.

But secondly there are things to 'put on' **12 It teaches us to ... to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,**

Being a Christian is not made up of negatives only; I must do the good I should do as well as fleeing from evil. Some Christians do not live with a clear conscience – this is in part due to not doing the good I am called to do.

That is to build in good character such as patience and love. **If you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** 2Pe 1:8

Ask - What are the things I must now do to live to please Christ my Lord?

6. Do you rise each morning to spend time with him to seek him earnestly – "Lord this is your day and I am yours I want go through it to be fully in your will and to serve you. Then you will have Joy and a clear conscience. Then as you pray you will see progress in your life – and the lives of others.
7. Christ is our object of hope and worship. Will you pay him internal as well as external worship? — loving, fearing, and trusting him? Will you depend on him, and devote yourself to him - praying to him, praising him, and meditating on his word and works. This is our daily business. This is daily godliness.

✚ **D. L. Moody - A man can no more take a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough today to last him for the next six months, or take sufficient air into his lungs to sustain life for a week to come. We must draw upon God's boundless stores for grace day by day, as we need it.**

The Christian life is a life looking forward. Here is the carrot - **13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, - Yes Jesus is no less than God Himself!**

Yes he will return – and in the mean time we ‘wait’ what does that mean?

- Do you treat your life here on earth as if you are sitting in a waiting room – waiting for the train to arrive which will take you to heaven?
- In the meantime, do you **wait** twiddling your thumbs and with arms folded? Are you passing through this life as if it is a great ‘transit lounge’
- ✚ **The gospel teaches us not only how to believe and hope well, - but also to use this time to live well. This is the master’s purpose!**

Yes, we do have our eyes on the glories of another world, to which a sober, righteous, and godly life in this is preparation: - while we *eagerly await our Lord and Saviour to come and take us there.*

But this spurs to live now in a careful manner – and to devote our time and attention to things that have value for then, - for soon then will be now!

14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Here is the price of our redemption: He gave himself *for my sake* therefore I will sanctify myself, I will separate and devote myself to Him and his work. **to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.**

Christ died to purify as well as to pardon — to bring grace, to heal my nature, as well as to free me from guilt and condemnation. He gave himself for his church, *to cleanse it.* to make a people distinct from those around by purifying us.

- ✚ **O God, how beautiful the thought, How merciful the blest decree, That grace can always be found when sought, and nought shut out the soul from thee.—Eliza Cook. Christian reflect on what Christ has done. – and, come readily to the fount of blessing.**

Grace obliges me, Grace spurs me *The love of Christ* compels me not to live to self, but to live for him. How did Paul live the life he did? He knew and depended on Christ’s Grace. He went often to that gushing fount of Grace; the Lord Jesus the Rock who gushes grace.

Difficulties are also part of Grace. Do you feel you fail again and again?... let the experiences of other help you.

- Again George Verwer who said these words recently: This time 61 years ago, after studying Russian in Madrid, I was about to leave for my literature smuggling and distribution in the USSR which ended in failure.

His booklet covering what happened is called “Failure, the back door to success”. He goes on to say...

- “I often think of the different co-workers who have gone home to Jesus. One of them was Ray Lentzsch who died in June 2020. He and I were often together and especially ministered in India. He would often sing: 'The Lion of Judah will break every chain and give us the victory again and again', but I remember him even more for his singing 'HE GIVES MORE GRACE WHEN THE BURDENS GROW GREATER'.

George concludes: I pray you are appropriating that GRACE no matter what trial or difficulty you are facing and I am speaking to myself here.”

- ✚ **So make the most of Grace**

The means of Grace are the ways Grace is conveyed to me, and the working of grace in me. This is how Christ brings grace to the hearts of his people.

The chain of: The Spirit, the Word, prayer, the fellowship, service. not rota!

- ✚ **God's grace ... goes before the unwilling to make him willing; it follows the willing to make his will effectual. *Augustine of Hippo.***

- ✚ **'Lord it is my chief complaint, that my love is weak and faint; yet I love thee and adore, oh for grace to love thee more!' (William Cowper)**

These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.” Grace is there for you to draw up

A ship years ago was in distress on the high seas because her supply of fresh water had run out. The crew was liable to die the most horrible of deaths by thirst, and that with water all around him. When hope was almost given up, they sighted a ship in the far distance. At once they hoisted signals of distress. The only answer they got was, "Dip it up." What heartless mockery to tell people to dip up buckets of salt water! They signaled again, but the same answer came back. In despair, they lowered a bucket. Imagine their amazement and their joy when the water proved to be fresh, living water. Far from the coast they were still within the fresh water mouth of the mighty River Amazon.

Are we not often in the same case as that? Life all around seems dead and dull and dry. We feel inclined to throw things up in despair. Don’t stagger with thirst and die, when all the time the infinite resources of a good and loving God are around us. We need to draw it up, to draw from Him.

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