

Faith that Endures, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 10: Living Ready Lives

Titus 2:11-14

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Set the passage in its own paragraph before you open it, because Titus 2:11 begins with “For,” and a “for” always points back at something. Paul has just spent ten verses telling Titus what to teach older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and slaves: sober, dignified, self-controlled, submissive, faithful, so that “in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” (Titus 2:10). Then comes verse 11, and it is the engine underneath all of it. Why should ordinary people on Crete live that way? Because grace appeared. Help your class feel that these four verses are not a doctrinal excursion dropped into a practical letter. They are the reason the practical letter exists.

The heart of this lesson is the verb in verse 12, and if your class gets it, they get everything. Grace trains. Not grace permits, not grace overlooks, not grace merely pardons. The same grace that saves is the grace that puts a man in school and teaches him to renounce ungodliness. That single word cuts in two directions at once, and your class needs both cuts. To the man who thinks grace means the standard has been lowered, verse 12 says grace is what raises it. To the man who thinks holiness is how he earns his standing, verse 11 says grace appeared first and brought the salvation with it. Paul refuses both errors in one sentence, and he never once treats the Christian as passive. Grace trains us, and trainees work.

Two boundaries need a steady hand. First, verse 13 speaks of “our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,” and someone will hear a timeline in it. There is no earthly reign here, no interval, no rehearsal. Scripture knows one return, one resurrection of the just and the unjust, and one judgment (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). Christ is reigning now and will deliver the kingdom to the Father at the end (1 Corinthians 15:24-26). Second, verse 11 says grace brought salvation “for all people,” and someone will hear universalism. Read verse 12: this grace trains, and training can be refused. Aim the hour at a class that leaves knowing grace is not a permission slip and not a wage, but a teacher they are currently either obeying or ignoring.

Question 1

Student Question:

In verse 11, Paul says “the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.” What does it mean that grace “appeared,” and how is the gospel connected to grace?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Start with the verb, because it will reframe the word “grace” for half your class. Paul does not say grace exists, or grace is available, or grace was extended. He says grace appeared. The Greek word is *epiphainō*, from which we get epiphany, and it means to become visible, to show up, to break into view like a light in a dark room. Grace, in this sentence, has a location and a date. Ask your class what it does to their idea of grace to learn that Paul treats it as something you could have watched walk down a road.

Then make the identification plain, because Paul makes it himself elsewhere. What appeared? A Person. Paul tells Timothy that God’s purpose in grace “now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10). Grace appeared at Bethlehem, walked through Galilee, and hung on a cross. Help your class see the difference this makes. Grace is not God’s general willingness to be lenient. Grace is an event with nail marks in it.

Now draw out why Paul says grace “brought” salvation rather than promised it. The salvation is not something grace makes possible on the condition that we do enough afterward. Grace arrived carrying it. That protects the class from the oldest mistake in religion, which is treating obedience as the price of God’s favor rather than the response to it. Paul says it flatly in the next chapter: “he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy” (Titus 3:5). Nothing we do purchased the appearing.

Then connect grace to the gospel, because the question asks it and because it guards a real boundary. How does the grace that appeared two thousand years ago reach a man in your class today? Through the message. “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). Paul says the same to Titus: God “manifested in his word through the preaching” what He promised (Titus 1:3). This matters. God does not deliver grace by an inner voice, a prompting, or a private word. He delivered it in an event and He delivers the news of it in a book, and the book is sufficient (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Bring it home before you leave verse 11, because the rest of the passage depends on the class believing this one. Ask them whether their picture of grace is a feeling God has or a thing God did. The difference shows up under pressure. A feeling can change. An appearing is history, and history does not move when we do.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- “Appeared” (*epiphainō*) means grace became visible; it is an event, not a disposition (Titus 2:11)
- What appeared was a Person: grace is manifested in the appearing of Christ (2 Timothy 1:10)
- Grace brought salvation; it did not merely make it purchasable by our works (Titus 3:5)
- The grace that appeared reaches us through the preached word, not through inner promptings (Romans 10:17; Titus 1:3)

- Scripture is sufficient to deliver what grace accomplished; no new revelation is needed (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- Verse 11 begins with “For,” grounding the whole ethical section of Titus 2 in grace

Discussion Prompts

- Is your picture of grace a feeling God has, or a thing God did? Which one holds up on a hard week?
- If grace appeared in a Person, what does that say about people who want grace without Christ?
- Why does it matter that grace reaches us through a message rather than through a private impression?

Question 2

Student Question:

The phrase “bringing salvation for all people” has been interpreted in different ways. What does this phrase mean in context, and how does it relate to God’s invitation to all people rather than unconditional universalism?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Let the class see the two errors this phrase gets pulled toward, because it gets pulled both ways and your people have met both. On one side, universalism: grace saved everybody, so nothing is required and nobody is lost. On the other side, Calvinism’s limited atonement: Christ died only for a chosen few, and “all people” cannot mean all. Paul’s sentence refuses both, and the context does the refuting for you.

Answer the universalist reading from the very next word. Verse 12 says this grace is “training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions.” Training is not a thing that happens to a rock. It happens to a person who shows up, listens, and obeys, and it can be walked out on. If grace saved every soul unconditionally, Paul would have no reason to tell Titus what to teach anybody. The grace that appeared for all is the grace that trains those who receive it, and verse 14 describes the result as “a people for his own possession,” which is a group with an edge to it, not the whole human race by default.

Then answer the other error, and answer it kindly, because the people who hold it love the Bible. Paul means all when he says all. He tells Timothy that God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4), and that Christ “gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:6). John says Christ is the propitiation “for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). Notice the setting: Paul has just addressed old men, young women, and slaves, the whole social ladder of Crete top to bottom. Grace appeared for the slave and the master alike. God did not pick a few and pass over the rest, and He does not drag anyone in against his will.

So give the class the distinction that holds the verse together. Salvation is offered to all and applied to those who receive it. The invitation is universal; the reception is not. Jesus stood over a city and said, “How often would I have gathered your children together, and you were not willing” (Matthew 23:37). That sentence is impossible if grace is irresistible, and it is unbearable if grace is limited. Grace is genuinely for all people, and it is genuinely refusable, which is exactly why Paul spends the rest of the paragraph telling us what receiving it looks like.

Bring it home. Ask your class who they have quietly written off as beyond the reach of this verse. Paul was writing to Crete, a place whose own prophet said its people were “always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons” (Titus 1:12). That is where Paul said grace appeared bringing salvation for all people. If grace found Crete, your class has no one left on the list.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Against universalism: the same grace “trains,” and training can be refused (Titus 2:12)
- Verse 14 describes a distinct people for His own possession, not the whole human race by default
- Against limited atonement: God desires all to be saved and Christ ransomed all (1 Timothy 2:4-6; 1 John 2:2)
- Against irresistible grace: “you were not willing” assumes grace can be refused (Matthew 23:37)
- Salvation is offered to all and applied to those who receive it; the invitation is universal, the reception is not
- The context is every social rank on Crete, which is why “all people” is emphatic (Titus 2:2-10)
- Grace appeared for a people of notorious reputation, which forbids writing anyone off (Titus 1:12)

Discussion Prompts

- Who have you quietly decided is beyond the reach of this verse?
- If grace saved everyone unconditionally, what would be left for verse 12 to say?
- How would you answer, kindly, a friend who says Christ died only for the chosen?

Question 3

Student Question:

According to verse 12, grace “trains us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions.” How does grace train a believer? What is the process Paul is describing?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the hinge of the lesson, so slow down here and give the class the word. The Greek is *paideuō*, the verb behind *paideia*, which is what you did with a child you were raising: teaching, correcting, disciplining, forming. It is the same family of words the Hebrews writer uses for

God's discipline of His sons (Hebrews 12:5-11). Grace is not a pardon slipped under the door. Grace is an upbringing. Ask your class to say the sentence out loud and hear how strange it is to modern ears: grace disciplines me.

Then let the class feel what that does to the two popular errors at once, because this verb kills both. To the man who says grace means the rules are off, Paul says grace is the thing teaching you the rules. Grace is not the alternative to holiness; grace is the schoolmaster of holiness. And to the man who is grinding away trying to earn God's acceptance, Paul says the training started after grace appeared, not before. You are not working your way into the house. You are being raised inside it. Both men leave the room corrected by one verb.

Now describe the process, because the question asks for it and Paul lays it out. Grace trains through the word, which is where grace speaks. Paul told the Ephesian elders he was committing them "to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up" (Acts 20:32). It trains through the Spirit working by means of that word, through the correction of brethren, and through the plain discipline of the Father. And notice, importantly, that the trainee is not passive. Paul says "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you" (Philippians 2:12-13). Both halves are in one sentence. God works, and we work, and Paul saw no contradiction. Guard your class from both a sanctification they think they generate and a sanctification they think they merely receive while sitting still.

Then draw out the word "renounce," because it is stronger than the class expects. It means to say no, to disown, to deny. It is the same word used of Peter denying Christ. Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness the way Peter denied Jesus in the courtyard, that flatly and that completely. That is not a soft word, and it is not a single moment either. Training implies repetition. Nobody is trained by one lesson, which means the class should expect this to be the work of a life rather than the achievement of a good week.

Bring it home concretely. Ask your class what grace has been teaching them lately, and be ready for silence, because most people have never once considered that grace might have a curriculum. Then press it: if grace is a teacher and you have learned nothing in a year, what does that say about whether you have been showing up for class?

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- "Trains" (paideuō) means to raise, correct, and discipline as a child; grace is an upbringing, not a pardon slipped under the door
- Against grace-as-license: grace is the schoolmaster of holiness, not its alternative (Titus 2:12)
- Against works-earned salvation: the training begins after grace appears, not as its price (Titus 2:11; 3:5)
- Grace trains by means of the word, which is able to build us up (Acts 20:32)
- Sanctification is God's work in which the Christian genuinely cooperates; both halves stand in one sentence (Philippians 2:12-13)

- “Renounce” means to deny or disown flatly, not to moderate
- Training implies repetition, so this is the work of a life rather than a single decision

Discussion Prompts

- What has grace been teaching you lately? Be specific.
- If grace is a teacher and you have learned nothing in a year, what does that suggest?
- How do you hold together “God works in you” and “work out your own salvation” without dropping either?

Question 4

Student Question:

Paul says believers are to live “self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age” (v. 12). What does each of these qualities look like in daily life?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Point out the shape before you take the three words apart, because the shape is deliberate. Verse 12 has a negative and a positive: renounce, then live. Grace does not merely empty a life; it furnishes one. And the three words Paul chooses cover the whole field. Self-controlled looks inward, upright looks outward at other people, godly looks upward at God. Ask your class to notice that Paul left no room. There is no private corner of a man that grace agrees not to enter.

Take self-controlled first, because it is Paul’s favorite word in this letter. *Sōphrōn* and its relatives appear five times in Titus 2 alone, applied to old men, young women, young men, and now everybody. It means sober-minded, sensible, master of yourself. In daily life it is the man who does not say the thing he wants to say, the woman who closes the laptop, the appetite that does not get to vote. Help the class see this is not natural temperament. Paul commands it, which means it is trainable, which is exactly what verse 12 just said grace does.

Then upright, which is the horizontal one. It means just, righteous in dealings, the man whose word is good. This is the plumb line applied where nobody is watching: the invoice, the tax return, the promise made to a child, the way an employee is spoken to. Your class may find this the least spiritual of the three and it is the one their neighbors will actually see. Remember the reason Paul gave back in verse 10, that the whole point is to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.” A Christian who cheats has not merely sinned. He has made the gospel look like a lie.

Then godly, the vertical one, which keeps the other two from collapsing into mere respectability. *Eusebōs* means living toward God with reverence, a life oriented around Him rather than around itself. Draw this out, because it is the difference between a Christian and a decent man. A decent man can be self-controlled and upright his whole life and never once think of God. Godliness is what makes the first two worship instead of good manners. And it is the one the neighbors cannot verify, which is precisely why Paul included it.

Bring it home by asking which of the three is the weak leg, because everyone in the room has one. Some are godly and not upright. Some are upright and not self-controlled. Some are self-controlled and not godly, which is the most respectable way to be lost. Have each person name his own, and remind them of the verb from verse 12. The weak leg is not a life sentence. It is the next thing grace intends to teach them.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Verse 12 is negative then positive: grace empties a life and then furnishes one
- The three words cover the whole field: self-controlled (inward), upright (outward), godly (upward)
- Self-control is commanded, not a temperament, and it is a theme of the whole chapter (Titus 2:2, 5, 6)
- Upright means just in dealings, which is where the world actually reads the gospel (Titus 2:10)
- Godliness keeps the first two from collapsing into respectability without God
- A Christian who cheats does not merely sin; he makes the doctrine look false (Titus 2:10)
- These are the fruit of grace's training, not the price of grace

Discussion Prompts

- Which of the three is your weak leg? Name it honestly.
- Where would your neighbors say your gospel looks like a lie?
- What is the difference between a godly man and a merely decent one?

Question 5

Student Question:

Why does Paul specify "in the present age"? What challenges does the present age pose to living faithfully?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Notice what Paul refuses to allow, because those three words shut a door your class keeps trying to open. He does not say live godly lives in the age to come, or in a monastery, or once the culture improves, or when you retire and finally have time. He says in the present age. The stage on which grace trains us is this one: this decade, this job, this city, these neighbors, this election year. Help your class see that Paul is deliberately denying them the escape hatch of a better set of circumstances.

Then let the class hear what the phrase implies about the age itself. Paul is not neutral about it. He calls it "the present evil age" and says Christ "gave himself for our sins to deliver us from" it (Galatians 1:4). John says the world is passing away along with its desires (1 John 2:17). So Paul is asking for something genuinely difficult: godliness planted in hostile soil. He is not naive. He

knows what he is asking, and he asks it anyway, which tells you what he thinks grace is capable of.

Draw out the actual challenges, and make them concrete rather than abstract. The present age is loud, it is fast, and it is persuasive, and its central claim is that this is all there is. It does not usually argue a Christian out of his faith. It crowds it out. Paul watched it happen to a coworker and named him: “Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me” (2 Timothy 4:10). That is not a story about a heretic. It is a story about a man who found the present age more interesting than the coming one. Ask your class whether that is a danger they feel or a danger they have stopped feeling, because the second is worse.

Now show the class the pressure this phrase relieves, because it cuts the other way too. If godliness belongs to the present age, then no one has to wait to begin. There is no preparation period, no better version of yourself that has to arrive first. The man who is tired, the woman whose week was a wreck, the teenager who does not know anything yet: the assignment is now, in the age they are actually standing in, which is the only age anyone has ever obeyed God in. Paul says do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed (Romans 12:2). Both verbs happen here.

Bring it home. Ask your class what they are waiting for. Almost everyone has a version of “once this passes, I will get serious.” Name it out loud, because Paul just took it away. Grace does not train us for an age we are not living in. It trains us for Tuesday.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Godliness is assigned to this age, not postponed to better circumstances (Titus 2:12)
- Paul is not neutral about the age: Christ died to deliver us from “the present evil age” (Galatians 1:4)
- The world and its desires are passing away, which reorders what is worth wanting (1 John 2:17)
- The age rarely argues faith away; it crowds it out, as it did with Demas (2 Timothy 4:10)
- Because the assignment is now, no one must wait to become a better version of himself first
- Do not be conformed, but be transformed; both verbs are for the present (Romans 12:2)

Discussion Prompts

- What are you waiting to pass before you get serious with God?
- Where has the present age crowded your faith out rather than argued it away?
- Is the pull of this world a danger you still feel, or one you have stopped feeling?

Question 6

Student Question:

In verse 13, Paul describes believers as “waiting for our blessed hope.” What is this blessed hope, and how does living with expectation shape the way Christians endure?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Identify the hope plainly, because Paul does. He names it in the same breath: “our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” The hope is not heaven in the abstract, not a general optimism, not the improvement of the world. The hope is a Person arriving. Notice the symmetry with verse 11 and let your class catch it: grace appeared, and glory will appear. The Christian life is lived in the space between two appearances, and both of them are Christ.

Then correct the word “hope” for the class, because our English has ruined it. We use it for what we do not have and cannot count on. Scripture uses it for what we do not have yet and can count on entirely. Hebrews calls it “a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul” (Hebrews 6:19). And correct “waiting” while you are at it. This is not idling. Paul is describing people who are actively renouncing, actively living self-controlled lives, all of it while watching the road. Biblical waiting has calluses on it.

Now guard the boundary, kindly and plainly, because verse 13 is a favorite of the timeline builders. There is nothing here about an earthly reign, a secret removal of the church, or a thousand-year kingdom to be established when He comes. Paul names one appearing, and Scripture is consistent about what happens at it: one return, one resurrection of “those who have done good” and “those who have done evil” together (John 5:28-29), one general resurrection “of both the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:15), one judgment. Christ is not a king waiting to be crowned. He reigns now, and “then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father” (1 Corinthians 15:24-26). Do not let the class trade a hope for a chart.

Then answer the question the class actually needs answered: how does expectation produce endurance? Because a race with a finish line is run differently than one without. Peter draws the line himself: since all these things are to be dissolved, “what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness” (2 Peter 3:11). The hope does not make us passive; it makes us urgent. It also makes present suffering survivable, because a man can endure almost anything if he knows how long and knows what is on the other side. Take the appearing away and verse 12 becomes an unbearable weight. Leave it in, and verse 12 becomes a preparation.

Bring it home the way the student guide does. Ask them the plain question: if Christ appeared tomorrow, what about this week would you wish had been different? Then ask why they are waiting. Hope that changes nothing about Tuesday is not the hope Paul is describing. It is a preference.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The blessed hope is a Person arriving: the appearing of Christ in glory (Titus 2:13)

- The Christian lives between two appearances, grace already and glory yet to come (Titus 2:11, 13)
- Biblical hope is confident expectation, an anchor, not wishfulness (Hebrews 6:19)
- Against premillennialism: one return, one resurrection of just and unjust, one judgment (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15)
- Christ reigns now and delivers the kingdom to the Father at the end; He is not a king-in-waiting (1 Corinthians 15:24-26)
- The hope produces holiness and urgency, not passivity or date-setting (2 Peter 3:11)
- “Waiting” here is active: it is done while renouncing and living godly lives

Discussion Prompts

- If Christ appeared tomorrow, what about this week would you wish had been different?
- What is the difference between a hope and a preference, judging by what it changes?
- Why does knowing there is a finish line change the way a race is run?

Question 7

Student Question:

Paul identifies this hope as “the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (v. 13). What does this description reveal about who Jesus is?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Read the phrase slowly to the class, because it is one of the clearest statements of the deity of Christ in the New Testament and most people read straight past it. “Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” Paul is not naming two persons here and expecting one appearing. The grammar binds “God” and “Savior” together under a single article and then names them: Jesus Christ. Peter writes the same construction: “our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1). Your class does not need the Greek, but they do need to be told plainly that Paul just called Jesus God.

Then let the class see the company this verse keeps, because Scripture is not shy about it. John opens with “the Word was God” (John 1:1). Thomas fell down and said, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Paul says “in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Colossians 2:9). Isaiah calls the coming child “Mighty God” (Isaiah 9:6). This is not a doctrine assembled from hints. It is the plain claim of the whole book, and Titus 2:13 states it in six words.

Now draw out why Paul says it here rather than in a doctrinal treatise, because that is the interesting part. He is in the middle of telling slaves and old women how to behave, and he anchors it in the deity of Christ. Why? Because who is coming determines how you wait. If the One appearing is merely a great teacher returning, then verse 12 is optional advice. If the One appearing is our great God, then the way a man handles his temper and his money is being conducted in front of the One who made him. Doctrine is not the opposite of practice here. It is the floor under it.

Then take up the word “glory,” because it is the contrast that makes the verse ache. What appeared the first time did not look like glory. It looked like a carpenter, and then a corpse. Grace appeared veiled. Glory will not be veiled. “Every eye will see him, even those who pierced him” (Revelation 1:7). Help the class feel that the second appearing is the same Person with the covering removed, and the ones who dismissed Him the first time will not be able to dismiss what they see the second time.

Bring it home. Ask your class whether their Jesus is big enough to be described this way. Most of us carry a Jesus who is kind, and helpful, and roughly our size. Paul says our great God. If that is who is coming, then waiting is not a passive posture. It is the posture of a servant who hears the key in the door.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Paul calls Jesus “our great God and Savior”; the phrase names one Person, not two (Titus 2:13)
- Peter uses the same construction of Christ (2 Peter 1:1)
- The deity of Christ is the plain claim of Scripture, not an inference (John 1:1; John 20:28; Colossians 2:9)
- One appearing is in view, which is why God and Savior are joined here
- Doctrine is the floor under practice: who is coming determines how we wait
- The first appearing veiled the glory; the second will not (Revelation 1:7)
- A Jesus scaled down to our size cannot support the commands of verse 12

Discussion Prompts

- Is your Jesus big enough to be called “our great God”? What would change if He were?
- Why does Paul anchor instructions about ordinary behavior in the deity of Christ?
- How does knowing who is coming change the way you would want to be found?

Question 8

Student Question:

Verse 14 says Christ “gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness.” What does redemption from lawlessness mean, and how does it relate to holy living?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Start with “gave himself,” because the class will hurry past the most important two words in the verse. Nobody took His life. He gave it. And notice the sequence Paul has built: grace appeared (v. 11), grace trains (v. 12), we wait (v. 13), and now the cost of all of it (v. 14). Everything in this paragraph is purchased. Ask your class to hold verses 12 and 14 together for a moment. The self-control Paul asks for is not a fee we pay. It is what was bought.

Then define redeem, because it is a market word and the picture matters. Lutroō means to release by paying a ransom price. It is what you did to get a slave out. There is a price, an owner, and a person who cannot free himself. Paul says the price was Himself. Peter says it was “not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19). This is the answer to anyone who thinks grace was cheap because it was free. It was free to us. It was not free.

Now take up “lawlessness,” which is a more precise word than your class expects. John defines it: “sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4). It is not merely breaking rules. It is the refusal of rule, the stance of a man who will not be governed, the “I will not have this man to reign over me” of the parable. Notice, then, what Christ redeems us from. Not from consequences only. Not from guilt only. From lawlessness itself, which is the condition, not just the record. Paul is echoing the psalm: “he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities” (Psalm 130:8).

So answer the question the class needs answered, and let it land, because it collapses the whole grace-versus-holiness argument. If Christ died to redeem us from lawlessness, then a Christian who uses grace as permission for lawlessness has turned the cross against its own purpose. That is Paul’s argument in Romans: “Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means!” (Romans 6:1-2). Holy living is not a condition added on to redemption. It is the thing redemption was for. And notice the word “all.” Not the respectable sins retained, not one area kept back. All lawlessness.

Bring it home with a question that costs something. Ask your class what area they have quietly filed under “that is just how I am.” Paul says Christ gave Himself to redeem us from all lawlessness, and “all” includes the one everyone in your class just thought of. Redemption is not a pardon that leaves the slave in the house. It is a purchase that walks him out.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- “Gave himself” means the price was voluntary; nobody took His life (Titus 2:14; John 10:18)
- Redeem (lutroō) is a ransom word: a price, an owner, and a person who cannot free himself (1 Peter 1:18-19)
- Grace was free to us; it was not free
- Lawlessness is the refusal of rule, not merely rule-breaking; sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4)
- Christ redeems from the condition, not merely the record (Psalm 130:8)
- Against grace-as-license: continuing in sin turns the cross against its own purpose (Romans 6:1-2)
- “All lawlessness” leaves no area filed under “that is just how I am”

Discussion Prompts

- What have you quietly filed under “that is just how I am”? Does “all lawlessness” include it?
- If Christ died to redeem us from lawlessness, what happens to the argument that grace permits it?

- What is the difference between being pardoned and being purchased?

Question 9

Student Question:

Paul adds that Christ's purpose is to "purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works" (v. 14). How does this verse connect grace, identity, and action?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Show the class the order, because the order is the doctrine. Christ gave Himself, then purifies, then possesses, then the people are zealous for good works. Grace first, identity second, action third. Every religious error in the room is a scrambling of that order. Reverse it and you get a man trying to work his way into being God's possession. Stop after the second and you get a man who is God's possession and does nothing about it. Paul's order rules out both, and he did it in one sentence.

Then let the class hear the echo, because Paul is quoting Israel's own vocabulary and applying it to a mixed congregation on Crete. God told Israel at Sinai, "you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples" (Exodus 19:5). Peter says it of the church outright: "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession" (1 Peter 2:9). Help your class feel the weight. The words spoken over Israel at the mountain now stand over the people sitting in your class, and the price was not a covenant ceremony but a cross.

Now be precise about identity, because this is where a class can drift. A "people for his own possession" is not a club anyone joins and it is not a roll anyone gets voted onto. The Lord adds the saved to His body when they obey the gospel (Acts 2:47), and the body is composed of individual saved people, not of congregations (1 Corinthians 12:27; Romans 12:5). No one belongs to Christ by belonging to a group. Purified is how a person enters this people, and Scripture is not vague about when the purifying is applied: "rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27).

Then take up "zealous," because it is a surprising word and Paul chose it. Not willing to do good works, not available for good works. Zealous. It is a hot word, the word for a partisan, a man with a cause. And notice whose zeal it is not: Paul does not say zealous to be saved. These people are already purified and already possessed. Their zeal is not anxiety trying to earn something. It is the natural energy of people who know what they cost and whose they are. That is the difference between a servant and an applicant.

Bring it home. Ask your class which link in the chain is broken for them. Some have never been purified and need to hear Acts 22:16 today. Some are His possession and are not zealous about anything except their own schedule. And some are exhausted from good works they are performing as a down payment on an acceptance they already have. Paul's sentence has a word for each of them.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The order is grace, then identity, then action; reversing it produces works-salvation, and stopping short produces a dead faith (Titus 2:14)
- “A people for his own possession” applies Israel’s covenant language to the church (Exodus 19:5; 1 Peter 2:9)
- No one belongs to Christ by belonging to a group; the Lord adds the saved to the body (Acts 2:47)
- The body is composed of individual saved people, not of congregations (1 Corinthians 12:27; Romans 12:5)
- Purifying is applied when a penitent believer is baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27)
- “Zealous” is a hot word; good works are the energy of the purchased, not the payment of the applicant
- Christ purifies “for himself,” which makes holiness His purpose rather than our project

Discussion Prompts

- Which link is broken for you: never purified, purified but not zealous, or zealous as a down payment?
- What is the difference between a servant and an applicant?
- If you are His possession, what does He currently own that you are still using as your own?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking at Titus 2:11–14 as a whole, how do these verses provide a complete picture of what it means to live between the first and second comings of Christ with enduring faith?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Have the class assemble it, because the architecture is the argument. Grace appeared (v. 11). Grace trains us to renounce and to live (v. 12). We wait for the appearing of glory (v. 13). He gave Himself to redeem and purify a zealous people (v. 14). Look at what that is: past, present, future, and cost. Two appearances with our whole lives standing between them, and the space between is not empty. It is a classroom. Paul has given a class on Crete the entire Christian life in four verses, and every verse has a verb in it for them.

Then say the thing this passage is actually claiming, and let it land, because it settles an argument your class has probably heard all their lives. Grace and holiness are not rivals. Nearly every religious mistake treats them as a see-saw: raise one and the other must fall. Paul writes them as cause and effect. Grace is not the excuse for a lower standard; grace is the reason for a higher one and the power to reach it. Ask your class to say verse 12 back in their own words and

see whether the sentence still contains the word “trains.” If it does not, the error has already crept in.

Now show them where endurance actually comes from in this passage, because that is the point of the series. It does not come from gritting the teeth. It comes from being anchored at both ends. Behind us, an appearing that has already happened and cannot un-happen. Ahead of us, an appearing that is certain. A man suspended between two fixed points can endure a great deal of weather. Take away either end and he is just trying hard, and trying hard has never carried anyone to the finish. This is why this lesson sits where it does, one week from the end of a series on faith that endures.

Keep the class from a passive reading, though, because the verbs will not allow it. Renounce, live, wait, be zealous. God is not asking us to relax into grace. He is asking us to be trained by it, and trainees sweat. And yet keep them from the other reading too, because it is just as available: nothing here is earned. He gave Himself. He redeems. He purifies. He possesses. Every act of God in this passage is a gift, and every response of ours is a response. Hold both, and the class leaves with a Christianity that is neither lazy nor anxious.

End with the mirror the passage holds up. Verse 12 says godly lives “in the present age,” and the present age is the one your class walks out into in about ten minutes. So ask two questions and let them sit. First: what is grace currently trying to teach you that you have been refusing to learn? Second: if the appearing came this year, would it interrupt you or would it collect you? Living ready is not being afraid of that question. It is having already answered it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The passage covers past, present, future, and cost: grace appeared, grace trains, glory will appear, Christ gave Himself
- The Christian life is lived between two appearings, and the space between is a classroom (Titus 2:11, 13)
- Grace and holiness are cause and effect, not rivals
- Endurance comes from being anchored at both ends, not from gritting the teeth
- Against passivity: renounce, live, wait, and be zealous are all commands to us (Titus 2:12, 14)
- Against works-earned salvation: every act of God here is a gift and every act of ours is a response (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8-10)
- The assignment is the present age, which is the one the class walks out into

Discussion Prompts

- What is grace currently trying to teach you that you have been refusing to learn?
- If the appearing came this year, would it interrupt you or collect you?
- Say verse 12 back in your own words. Does your version still contain the word “trains”?