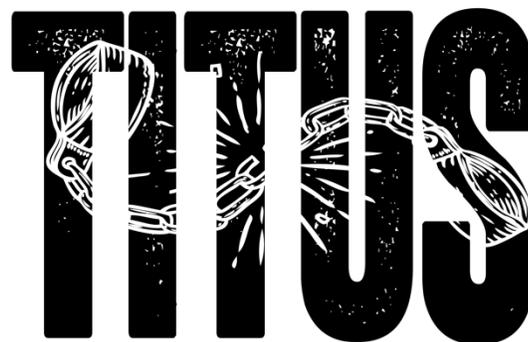


March 1, 2020 | DAVID ANDERSON

Grace, Glory & Good Works
Titus 2:9-15



Do you have a list? Do you have a list of all the ways you are falling short in life and in relationships? Do you have a list of all the things you want to become but aren't yet?

I think there is something in Christians that gravitates towards lists. We like lists. We like making lists for ourselves and we like making lists for other people too. Do you walk away from your list each day condemned, shamed and embarrassed?

We have a few options: 1) We can lie and pretend to live up to a list that we certainly aren't living up to, 2) We can get rid of the list altogether and whatever happens happens, or 3) We can ask if there is something else. Is this the Christian life? An endless cycle of lists and a failure to live up to those lists, walking away condemned, shamed and embarrassed?

Remember what Paul is communicating to Titus - what the island of Crete needs more than anything else are followers of Jesus who have been liberated by grace and ready to launch into every good work. The theme of Titus is: Set free. By grace. For good.

Chapter 2 of Titus begins with an emphatic pronoun, "But as for you, Titus!" Paul had just finished talking about the false teachers who don't preach sound doctrine, who turn people away from the truth, who divide households, and whose lives are abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Paul then goes on to lay out lists for the older men: temperate, dignified, self-controlled, sound of faith, sound of love, sound of endurance. He turns his attention to the older women: behavior fitting for those who are holy, not slandering, not slaves to excessive drinking, teaching what is good. He turns to the younger women: discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands. He talks to the young men: be sober-minded, showing yourself to be a pattern of good works, showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech.

In vs. 9-10, Paul even has a list for the slaves. The church in Crete is filled with women and slaves like in every other church planted by Paul. Why doesn't he condemn slavery here? I think if you read the rest of Paul, you will hear his view about slavery (1 Cor. 7:23, Eph 6:9, Col. 4:1, 1 Tim. 6:1-2, Philemon 16). If you read the rest of Scripture, you will hear God's feelings about slavery (see also Exodus 21:16), and yet God allows the people of God to be enslaved by Egypt and later by Assyria and later by Babylon and now by Rome. God's immediate agenda isn't to abolish slavery in the Roman empire; it is to free the nations from their spiritual bondage by the power of grace. So that even the slaves can "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (2:10). God wants to see the transformation from the Gospel and as these transformed lives emerge, they will take on the sins of society as we see in our human history.

For Paul the great epiphany, the turning point in history was the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The events of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection were the way by which the generous and powerful love of God was unveiled. The target audience wasn't one group of people, but the whole human race. His offer is to all the nations.

¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. ¹⁵ Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you. (Tit. 2:11-15)

Any person with any background, with any sins, with any past can walk through our church doors and can know that they have a seat at God's table. Why? Because of this thing called GRACE. By its very definition, you and I don't deserve grace. Everywhere else we work on the merit system, but not with God. What we bring to God are filthy rags. God exchanges those filthy rags for the robe of Christ's righteousness. We don't qualify for heaven, we never will. If you don't get this, you will not get grace.

How does grace train or teach us? Grace teaches us by the power of the Holy Spirit to 1) unpack who we are in Jesus Christ and 2) shed who we aren't any longer. As grace unleashes who you are in Christ, you will begin to shed ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age.

Paul says that our eyes need to be fixed on two great events: glory and grace. Paul says: 1) "Look for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" and 2) Remember the purpose of the cross was to redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Jesus His own special people, zealous for good works. These two great promises hedge us in behind and before.

**Redeemed from every lawless deed.
Purified as His own special people.
Zealous for good works!**

1. How can we do our lists this week under the love and power of the Holy Spirit?
2. What does our gracious God want to say to us as we humbly seek the good works He has for us this week?
3. How should the future return of Jesus and His redemptive cross impact our lives tomorrow?