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A Teacher Named Grace

Text: Titus 2:11-15

Review: Titus is a young pastor, left in Crete, by Paul, to set things in order and train leaders (1:5). You will recall that when the ethnic groups that were represented on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:11 are listed, Cretans are mentioned. Perhaps Titus has a small core of believers there on Crete that heard the word in Jerusalem. Titus is Greek and a convert to Christianity (Galatians 2:1-3) and traveled with his spiritual father, Paul.

2 Corinthians 8:23:

*If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you.*

Paul tells Pastor Titus that grace is going to be a significant theme in Titus’ Cretan ministry.

Whatever grace is it is universally accessible. That is, in the words of this text, it *has appeared to all* humanity. Listen carefully to the wording of this text. The grace of God is universally accessible but not universally accepted! Paul is not teaching universalism to his spiritual son, Titus.

Thomas Wittemore, a universalist, wrote:

*The sentiment by which Universalists are distinguished is this: that at last every individual of the human race shall become holy and happy*.

Universalism is a heresy. Not all people who hear the Greatest Story Ever Told of God’s sending Himself to earth in Jesus, will receive that story. The Bible does not teach that in the end, all will become holy and happy. However, God’s grace *has appeared* to all people.

What, exactly, is grace?

Definitions of grace:

* God’s favor toward the unworthy
* God’s benevolence on the undeserving
* “Grace is love that cares and stoops and rescues.”([John Stott](http://www.amazon.com/christthecontroversialistastudyinsomeessentialsofevangelicalreligionpaperback/dp/0877847134/?tag=justholc-20))
* “[Grace] is God reaching downward to people who are in rebellion against Him.”([Jerry Bridges](http://www.amazon.com/transforminggracelivingconfidentlyingodsunfailinglovepaperback/dp/1600063039/?tag=justholc-20))
* “Grace is unconditional love toward a person who does not deserve it.” ([Paul Zahl](http://www.amazon.com/thechristianityprimertwothousandyearsofamazinggracehardcover/dp/b000j33wje/?tag=justholc-20))
* "Grace is God's best idea. His decision to ravage a people by love, to rescue passionately, and to restore justly - what rivals it? Of all his wondrous works, grace, in my estimation, is the magnum opus." ([Max Lucado](https://amzn.to/3CP8cKY))

Whatever grace is, it teaches us (v.12).

There are a few words for *instruct* in the Greek language. The word here, *paideuo* (pahee -dyoo -o)*,* refers to instructing a very young child. It is sometimes translated *discipline* or *chasten.* Our English word derived from it is *pedagogy.* By the way, the tense of *paideuo* is in the present tense. It means that the teacher called grace is *continually* instructing us. God, through His grace, is shaping us, disciplining us, preserving us. Paul would say, in Galatians 1:15, that he was *called* through God’s grace. He wrote, in Ephesians 2:8, that we are *saved* by grace.

I hereby offer two lessons from a teacher called ‘Grace’.

**1**.

Grace teaches us how we ought to behave

* Self-denial

Jesus taught it (Matthew 16:24; John 13:1-17). Paul taught it to others, in addition to Titus (Ephesians 4:17-20).

* Avoidance of worldly lusts.
* Sensible holiness. We have seen the concept of sensibility earlier (1:8; 2:2, 5, 6). Grace teaches us to act like we’ve got some sense.
* Anticipation- looking for the blessed hope...

The glorious appearing of the One who

1. Gave Himself
2. Redeemed us
3. Purified us

In the verses which follow our text for today, Paul continues writing about how important good behavior is and the role of grace in that transformed life (3:1-8, especially v. 7).

**2.**

Grace teaches us who we are in Christ

Grace made us special (His own)- These young believers did not always see themselves this way.

“I’m special?????”

“Yes!!”

Cf. 1 Peter 2:9-10; Ephesians 2:11-13

That new sense of self is to be proclaimed. Chat this up. Tell everybody what grace has taught you, Titus.

A Matthew 25 congregation, which we aim to be, is a group of people ***through*** ***whom*** the grace of God flows, ***in whom*** the grace of God is seen and ***by whom*** the grace of God is proclaimed!!!

**Illus**.

In his book, *The Vital Balance,* Dr. Karl Menninger tells a story of Thomas Jefferson who was traveling with some companions by horseback. They came to a river which was swollen and the bridge across that river was washed away. Each rider had to cross the raging river on horseback. There was a traveler who was not part of the group, who was watching the riders go across the river. The stranger finally asked President Jefferson if he would take him to the other side. The president agreed and the stranger hopped on the back of Jefferson’s horse and made to safely to the other side. One of the people in the group asked, “Tell me, why did you select the president to ask this favor of?”

The stranger was shocked and didn’t know that it was the President who had given him a ride. He said, “All I know is that on some of your faces was written the answer ‘No’ and on some of them was the answer ‘yes’. His was a ‘Yes’ face.[[1]](#footnote-2)

The teacher named ‘Grace’ gives us a “yes” face. We say “yes” to love, “yes” to service, “yes” to engagement, “yes” to transformation, “yes” to holiness, “yes” to joy, “yes” to civility, “yes” to productivity,“yes” to sobriety, “yes” to hope and “yes” to peace.

Amen

1. Dr. Karl Menninger, M.D., with Martin Mayman, Ph.D and Paul Pruyser, Ph.D, *The Vital Balance* (New York: Viking Press, 1963), p. 22 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)