

Titus 2:10-15

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[0:00] Christmas is almost here. So just a few more announcements, I guess, before we get started. We're going to continue on in Titus, probably finish up Chapter 2 today. But tonight, is anybody going to come? Oh, great. All right, bring some friends, family. I hope you do.

It's going to be a great time. So again, 6 o'clock, we're going to have food. Come a little early if you've got a dish so we can get it all set up. And then at 7 o'clock, we're going to have a wonderful music service. I think you'll all enjoy it.

We've been enjoying practicing and making a joyful noise unto the Lord in our own ways. And we're looking forward to sharing that with you all and having a great time together.

Christmas is a great time where the whole world kind of has Jesus, the birth of this baby, on their mind. And what a great opportunity this time of year to talk to friends and family about the Lord. And, you know, whether it's in a work setting or whatever, we have this opportunity to share the gospel. And through, you know, well, what do you think about Christmas? Asking simple questions.

[1:09] What does Jesus mean to you? And find some opportunities to make conversation and be able to share the gospel. You know, last week, if any of you are here, we had Brooke Seekins, missionary to Malawi.

And she mentioned meeting a Christian. I think she was Catholic maybe. I can't remember. But somebody who was religious in nature. And she asked her, what is the gospel?

And she said something like, oh, you know, you go to church and you try to be a good person and that kind of thing. And to so many people, that's what they think Christianity is. And we're actually going to talk about that a little bit today.

But we have an opportunity to share with people what the actual gospel is and what the meaning of Christmas really is. Let me see. I think, let me see if there's any other announcements. Okay, so tonight we have the Christmas cantata.

Next week. What's happening next week? Next week is, on Sunday, is Christmas Day, right? So what are we doing? Are we having church? Are we not having church? I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago or a week or two ago.

[2:20] But we will have our regular service, this service that we're starting right now. We will not have the Sunday school. So if you typically come to Sunday school, I mean, you can show up to church.

The door might be locked. But I would recommend you just waiting until, what, maybe a quarter till 10 o'clock. I will say, I'd love if people brought some Christmas treats.

This is actually Roger's recommendation. It'll be kind of more of a relaxed service. I'm not going to be, we're not going to continue in Titus. We'll probably have more of a Christmassy type service.

There will be additional singing. In fact, if anybody has any additional special music that they'd like to bring, that would be awesome. I imagine we'll probably have a smaller crowd. And that is totally okay.

Like I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, please do not come to church because you feel like God's going to be upset if you don't come to church on Christmas morning. If you have a tradition where you get together with your family in the morning, like I've already talked to some people here where that's the case, and they have a special Christmas breakfast with their family, please do that.

[3:32] Don't feel like you have to come to church out of obligation. Like I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, I see all around the social media, everybody's passing around the guilt trips. You know, you have to be at church on Sunday.

Otherwise, what kind of Christian are you anyway, right? You're going to skip out on church on Sunday just to open presents with your family? What a horrible thing, right?

And I guess I'll say on the other side, you know, is there plenty of opportunity for us to feel feelings of guilt in our lives? Sure, so we shouldn't create man-made rules in order to make us have more opportunities to feel guilty.

But what's the opposite of that whole concept, right? Is that, well, if you don't show up to church on that Christmas morning because you're going to have, you know, a Christmas brunch with your family, or you could decide, well, I can be an extra good Christian and I'll show up to church and I won't be like those other people that are skipping out, right?

And then we can be filled with pride, right? And so if you're going to come to church next week, and the only reason is so that you can be better than the other Christians who are deciding to stay home, it might be a good idea just to stay home, right?

[4 : 50] Just so that you can avoid that whole thing. Amen? All right. Okay, so I'm excited for tonight. And then for next week, we'll have a nice intimate service here for those who are going to be here.

Just one more thing here. I brought this book up. We just got in some new books. Actually, more actually than that's out on the table. This one's from CMI. It's called The Creation Answers Book. And again, sharing the gospel with people. There are lots of objections that people might have. This is just a big one, right, is the whole concept of evolution.

And that's one of the big hurdles to people even investigating the claims of Jesus Christ and who he is and what he did for us. Well, if we just evolved from gorillas or primates or amoebas or whatever, then of course life is just kind of by chance and there's no real meaning or purpose.

And so there are great answers that you can give to people regarding evolution and creation. And this book, it's called The Creation Answers Book.

[5 : 58] It just has a list of common questions. I'll read a few. Let's see. What about carbon dating? Has anybody ever heard that as an objection, right? Carbon dating proves that we evolved from mush, right, or slime.

The earth is, you know, a gazillion years old. Let's see. Oh, who was Cain's wife? That's an objection, right?

The Bible can't be true because it says that Cain got married and, well, you know, there weren't any women around because he was the first, him and Abel were the first two boys. And we actually talked about that a little bit this morning during our Sunday school hour.

Was the flood global? What about continental drift? How did all the animals fit on the ark? So, and those may be questions that we as Christians have too. Those are good questions.

But if you're interested, this is a book out on the table. I think I bought five and there's only like two left. So some of you already took advantage of this. There's a suggested donation on the back.

[7 : 00] But if, you know, you're strapped for cash, please take it. I'd rather you read this and benefit from it than not because it's too much of a burden.

So, all right. Let's get started. You ready to jump into Titus? All right. Let's do it. All right. So, open up your Bibles to Titus chapter 2.

I think we're going to finish up with this chapter. You know, this is, again, an epistle from the Apostle Paul. And he wrote many of the epistles in the New Testament.

In fact, Paul's writings are most of the New Testament. When you read Paul's epistles, you'll notice a pattern. It's very common in his epistles that he will have the first half of his letter will be about the Lord, about what Christ did for us.

We call that more doctrine about what God has done for us and in us. And then usually the last half, he gets into more practical matters.

[8 : 17] It's not always how he does things, but it's kind of common that way. In Titus, it's a little bit different. In Titus, he gets in very early, right from the beginning, in talking about more practical matters.

Really, the outworking of the Christian life. And so, we've been looking at requirements for leaders in a church. And then beyond that, just how ought to any Christian live the Christian life?

Whether you're a man or a woman, whether you're young or old. And so, we've looked at all these things. And we found, I think, that there's not many differences in how we ought to live as Christians.

Whether you're a leader or whether you're not a leader, whether you're a man or a woman. There are a few little differences on how we ought to live. But mostly, it's a lot of the same things.

How we ought to live. How we ought to behave. But here, we're now in verse 11. Titus chapter 2, verse 11. And Paul, after talking about how we as Christians ought to behave, gets into more of, well, why?

[9 : 31] Why should we behave in this way? So, let's go ahead and read this, and then we'll jump into the details. Verse 11. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 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.

Speak these things, exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you. So, Paul's been talking, especially in this chapter, about how you ought to live as a Christian, how to live an upright life.

And then he starts this verse 11 with the word for. For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. For is one of those transition words. He said, I just told you how you ought to live as a Christian.

And so, let's get into the why. Let's get into the why. And that's what he's doing. You know, a common misperception, and we just talked about this during the announcements, a common misperception of Christianity is that Christianity, like many other religions, is just a religion that teaches you how to kind of live a good life.

You know, you do certain things, you form certain habits, you do certain rituals, and then your life will be a little bit better. You'll feel better about yourself.

[11 : 11] You'll have a better family life. You'll have more wisdom. You'll have maybe a better job, and maybe you can, you know, have more wealth.

You know, not be in dire straits all the time. And wisdom from the Bible will lead to those things. And the Bible is a book that teaches us moral truths, how we ought to live.

But if that's the primary message that you see in the Bible, then you've gotten it all wrong. Because the primary message of the Bible is not just how we ought to live, though that's an important thing. But it's that we have not lived how we ought. And God needed to do something to save us from ourselves, really, right?

From our own sins. We have not lived how we ought. And because of that, we've put ourselves, we have been captured by sin. And God did something for us through Jesus Christ, that little baby that was born in the manger that we're celebrating this month, to save us from our sins.

[12 : 23] And that if we trust in Him, then we can have eternal life with God. So, somebody could read through this book of Titus and think, oh, well, this is a nice book of instruction about how to just be a nice, good person.

And you'd miss a major point. So, here, Paul gets into the why. So, he says, For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

He talks about the grace of God. And this word grace is used, especially in the New Testament, a lot. You see it a lot. Especially by Paul. But we can also make a mistake as Christians in thinking of grace just by its definition.

The word grace just means favor. If you have grace, then you have favor towards someone. And God is a gracious God.

And God has shown favor to men throughout all of history. He showed favor to Adam. He showed favor to Abel, we read about this morning.

[13 : 40] He showed favor to the Jews. He showed favor to Moses, to Abraham, to all kinds of people. God has shown favor throughout the whole history of the world. But the important thing we need to notice here is that this is a specific kind of grace that Paul's talking about.

For the grace of God that brings salvation. This is a very specific kind of grace. Because God's grace has not always brought salvation.

Now, it was always in mind. We know from the very beginning. But the grace that he's talking about is that specific kind that brings salvation.

There's a verse in the Bible that I hope many of you have memorized in Ephesians 2, 8, and 9. That talks very explicitly about that kind of a grace. Ephesians 2, 8, and 9.

Let's see if I've got it written down here. It says this. That's the grace.

[14:51] There was a time when God, in his favor, gave people, specifically the Hebrews, Israel, gave them a law.

That was part of his favor. And they had to do certain things as part of that law. But did that bring salvation? It didn't.

Again, it was in mind. But that grace, that favor, didn't bring law. This grace that Paul is talking about is the grace that brings salvation.

Eternal life. And so when we read, a lot of times when you read grace in the Bible, we need to read it contrasting it with what? What's the opposite of grace?

Law, or sometimes we call it works, right? Works or law. So he's talking about, for the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

[15:49] So this whole section is about grace. And I think we can look at it as kind of three parts. He talks about what God has done in the past, what God's doing in us now, and what's to come because of God's grace.

He's brought salvation. It has appeared to all men. It's made available to all of us. The second part in verse 12, teaching us, that grace teaches us to deny ungodliness.

That's what his grace is doing in us now. He even says, in this present age, in verse 12. And then in verse 13, it talks about the blessed hope.

Hope, and we'll talk specifically about what that means. What is that blessed hope that's coming in the future? And so let's look at each of these three. So this blessed, excuse me, the salvation that has appeared to all men.

Now, I'm reading from the King James, and I don't think the King James has the best rendering or translation here. Because it could be.

[16:58] So, you know, translation is difficult. If any of you have ever tried to translate things, you realize that there's always difficulties in translating things. Language is an art form.

It's not a science or it's not like a mathematical equation. So translation is difficult. And so there is another way that this could be rendered, where it says here, to the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

Some might ask, well, has it really appeared to all men? Well, in a certain respect, it has. The grace of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, has been spread across the globe.

Right? Right? It's, you know, there are certain parts of the world where people have not heard. But in most of the world, the gospel is available.

But I think a different rendering, and let me see if I can find it. Here's one from the ESV. It says this, For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.

[18:01] So there it emphasizes the all is that the salvation is for all people. And I think that's probably what Paul is getting at here.

That the grace of God that is for all people has appeared. And this is different, again, in contrast with Israel.

Before, God's blessings, his promises, they were to a very specific group of people. They were to Israel. But now the grace of God, what is the ESV?

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people. So anyone can be a child of God. You don't have to be circumcised. You don't have to be an Israelite.

Anyone can come to the Lord. There's another guy. His name is Clark. Adam Clark said this. He rendered it this way. He said this would be a good way to render it. For the grace of God, that which saves, has shown forth upon all men.

[19:06] A few other verses that kind of speak to this. In 1 Timothy 2, verse 6, Paul says, talking about Christ, who gave himself a ransom for a few people.

No. He gave himself as a ransom for all. And then in 1 John 2, verse 2, and he himself, talking about Jesus Christ, is a propitiation, really a sacrifice, an atonement for our sins.

And not for ours only. Remember John. John was a Jew, right? He says, not just our sins, but also for the whole world.

The whole world. Peace on earth. Goodwill towards men. Right?

That's the message from Christmas. The whole earth. Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world. So, Christ did something for us.

[20:13] Salvation is available right now. It has been made available for all men. And then he says this in verse 12, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly,

righteously, and godly in this present age.

So, this grace that he's talking about teaches us something. And it specifically teaches us how we ought to live. The things that Paul has been talking about here. Well, in what way does the grace of God teach us something?

Teach us how to live. It's not totally clear, at least to me, what is he talking about? How does it teach? It shows us how to become saved.

But how does it teach us how to live godly? So, we'll talk about that in a second. So, specifically, he says denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.

So, there's kind of the negative. It teaches us the things to avoid. And then also, how we ought to live soberly and righteously and godly.

[21 : 21] So, sober life, life where you take things seriously, you take life seriously. Righteously, doing things that are right and godly. Being like God.

When I look at that phrase, worldly lusts, is there any lack of lusts of the world that present themselves to us? Maybe once a month, we'll find some kind of worldly lust that presents itself to us.

Every single day, right, the world is beckoning. Hey, I've got something for you. Why don't you come over here? Check this thing out. It's pretty nice. The world is constantly, constantly wants everyone, including believers, to join in its lusts and the things that really lead to sin.

I wanted to focus, and this gets into how grace teaches us, on a word that maybe I'm making too much of, but I'd really like to focus on it because I see it as a common word used, especially by Paul in his scriptures, especially when he's teaching how we ought to live.

Teaching us that denying ungodly and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.

[22 : 50] He uses this word, should. This is how we should live. Another word you might use is this is how we ought to live. I want us to notice that he doesn't say that you must live this way.

That word should is a little bit different from must. And there are commands in the Bible about things that you must do. And so, you're like, well, what's the point?

Are you saying that we don't have to live godly, upright lives? Yes, that's what I'm saying. Now, why would I say that?

I mean, this is church, right? You're not supposed to say that in church, that we, you know, as a Christian, you have to live a godly, upright life, right?

Or else, or else what? Well, there's all kinds of what else, right?

[24 : 12] Must is a stronger, right? If you tell somebody that they ought to do something, well, that's not as strong as saying, well, you have to do this, right? And so, if you want to make sure that somebody does what you want, it would be better if you say, you must do this, right?

You have to do these things. That would carry more weight, more oomph to it, wouldn't it? Right? So, why doesn't Paul use that word?

I mean, there's a different word in the Greek for that. In fact, should is actually just implied in the Greek. You know, there are, if you look in the Bible, there are two ways to motivate people.

Two ways to motivate people to do what is right and what is good. And this is the story of the Bible. The one way is you can have a system of rewards and punishments.

Where if you do these things, these good things, then you will be rewarded. And if you avoid the bad things, you will be rewarded. If you do the bad things, or you avoid the good things, you will be punished.

[25 : 31] And we are all very familiar with that whole system, aren't we? I mean, this is how our legal system works, isn't it? But this is what we call the law.

This is how our law, our civil law works here in any nation. And this is how the law works in the scriptures. Deuteronomy 11, 26 says this, Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse. The blessing if you obey, the blessing if you obey the commandment of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and the curse if you do not obey the commandment of the Lord your God. But turn aside from the way which I command you today to go after other gods which you have not known. And so there's a system here of, the Bible doesn't call it punishments and rewards, it uses the term blessing and cursing.

And this is the law. And this is a way that you can get people to do what you want them to do, to obey the commandments, to comply with what you need them to comply with.

[26 : 49] In Galatians chapter 3, Paul talks about those who are under this system and how it works out in reality.

He says in Galatians chapter 3, verse 10, For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. For it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not continue, and all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

If you don't do the law, what are you under? The curse. Well, but what about the blessing part, Paul? How come he didn't mention that? How come Paul didn't mention the blessing part?

If you do the law, you can be blessed. Is that where we find ourselves? No. We find that when we put ourselves under the law, we fail over and over and over again.

So you have a system of rewards and punishment to bring people to comply with what they ought to do, to do what is right and to do what is good.

[28 : 06] There's another way. And it seems on the face of it that it's just, it's bizarre. It wouldn't work. The other we call grace.

And that's where God takes the blessing and he says, Tell you what, I'm just going to give you the blessing for free. You don't have to do anything. You just trust me, humble yourself, and I'll give you the blessing for free right off the beginning.

You don't have to earn it. You don't have to do all these things to get the blessing. I'm just going to give it to you. All of it. Not half of it. Not 75%.

Not 99%. I'm going to give you 100% of the blessing. And then, you have access to me, the gift giver, and we can have a relationship.

And based on that relationship, we'll see how things go. Paul talks about this in Romans, in Romans chapter 8.

[29 : 18] If you're familiar with Romans chapter 7, it's Paul talking about this sin. You know, the law says this, and it just makes me want to do those bad things that the law says not to do.

And I find myself kind of wanting to do what's right, but I find myself not being able to do it. And what's going to happen?

Let's go ahead and turn there. Romans 8. If you have a Bible. The second to last verse there in Romans 7. So verse 24.

Oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? I'm such a failure. Chapter 8, verse 1, he says this.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. And then let's skip to verse 3.

[30 : 18] He says this, For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did, by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin.

He condemned sin in the flesh. that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

So what we could not do, God accomplished through Jesus Christ. We could work to be righteous, but how did that work out?

That failed. But instead, God gave us, through Jesus Christ, a gift of righteousness. So we can be righteous without doing anything.

Just trust in Him. So you ask the question, well, if God already made me righteous, then, why should I put any effort into actually living righteous?

[31 : 29] Why? I mean, I've already achieved 100% righteousness, right? So why should I put any effort towards loving my neighbor? And Paul is saying, very clearly, right here in Titus, how we ought to live, how we should.

So we don't have to live this life that we talk about. We don't have to live godly. Now, there is a way in which you can say you must, because there are consequences to sin, even for the Christian, right?

If you want to have a joy in your home, you have to control your temper, don't you? Right?

If you want to have a good marriage, you know, you have to avoid fornication. And so there is a certain sense when it comes to the consequences in this earthly life in which you must do certain things.

There's a condition there, right? You can't have a good family life, have a good marriage, and also do these other things. But when it comes to our relationship with God and our eternal life and our standing with Him as righteous, you don't have to do anything.

[32 : 56] And that is shocking to most people. It's shocking to non-believers. It's even shocking to some people who trust in Christ. So, if we already have righteousness, then what's our motivation? Why should we avoid ungodliness and worldly lusts? Why should we live sober and godly and righteous lives?

Let's look at a few more verses. Turn to Philippians chapter 2. See if I can find it.

In chapter 2. Chapter 2 is a chapter on humility. And verse 3, I'll just kind of skip ahead a little bit just to provide a little context.

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind. Let each esteem others better than himself. That's kind of the whole picture of this, at least this first half of chapter 2 of Philippians.

[34 : 07] Put others before yourself. Don't put yourself first. Consider yourself less than other people. But why? Why should I do that?

Well, we could say, you should do that so that you'll get a reward. Or you should do that so that you'll avoid a punishment.

You'll avoid a curse. And that might provide some motivation for some people. It's probably a motivation that doesn't last.

But what does Paul say here in verse 1? Therefore, if there is any consolation in Christ, have you been consoled by Christ? If any comfort of love, have you been comforted by Christ's love?

If any fellowship of the Spirit, have you enjoyed the fellowship of the Holy Spirit? If any affection and mercy, then fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love and being of one accord in one mind.

[35 : 22] Then in verse 5, he says, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but he made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. And so, he gets to the why here.

Don't humble yourself. Don't put others before yourself because you're looking for a reward or a punishment. But what did God do for you?

Let that be your motivation. Let your motivation be, I want to love my neighbor. I want to sacrifice, even a sacrificial love. Lay my life down for other people.

Why? Because God, my Savior, laid his life down for me. And I want to be like him. You know, we know this from, you know, even kids.

[36 : 33] You know, you have a father who is good. And you see, you might notice in certain families, some families, they have a lot of rules.

But the parents, even though they have a lot of rules, aren't exactly inspiring in their conduct. And so the kids grow up, they had all the rules.

They know all the right and wrong things. But they grow up and they just kind of live life their own way. But in another household, you might see, there wasn't a ton of rules.

Rules are important in any household, especially for kids. Kids need boundaries, rules, to help guide them in life. But you see a father and or a mother that inspires noble living.

And how much more impact does that have on a child? It makes a lifelong difference. You see a dad that sacrificed his time day in and day out for you, to love you.

[37 : 42] And you want to be that same kind of person, right? And that goes so much further than just having those regulations in front of you on all the things that you need to tick off in order to be a good person.

Instead, I want to be like my dad or I want to be like my mom. She sacrificed so much for us and I want to do the same. This is the life of grace.

When we say we're Grace Bible Church, this is a huge part of how we must live the Christian life. How God intended for us to live the Christian life.

A few more examples and I won't have you turn there just for the sake of time. Romans 12, 1 and 2 says this, I beseech you therefore, brethren, because of the mercies of God, because of what God did for you, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

And don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Why should we offer our bodies

as a living sacrifice?

[38 : 55] Why should we not be conformed to the pattern of this world? Because of his mercy, because of what he did for us, because he already gave us every blessing.

We already have every blessing. And because he did all that for us, we ought to live a certain way. Ephesians 2, the same passage, this is to, we're going to add an extra verse, 2, 8, 9, and 10.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, you don't have to do anything. Why? Lest anyone should boast.

God's taking that away from us. You're not allowed to boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

This is how we ought to live. And God gave us a gift. He gave us all the benefits at the beginning. And so we can live the kind of life that we ought to, that God wants us to, that we should, because it's the right thing to do, but because he first loved us.

[40 : 20] Amen? He says, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godliness in this present age.

Let me just focus a second on this present age. Some people might think, oh, you know, God saved me, and so I can't wait to get to heaven, and then I'll live for the Lord then.

I get the idea from some people that that's kind of how they live their lives. You know, I'm saved, and, you know, it's kind of difficult to push back against all the things that the world is throwing at me.

You know, there's, it's tough, right? And, you know, you can actually get further in life, and there's less things that you have to put up with and deal with, and it's, you know, actually kind of enjoyable enjoying some of the pleasures of sin.

So, but in heaven, that's when I, like, start to live for the Lord. No. God wants us to do that now. He wants us to live that way now, in this present age, not just in the age to come.

[41 : 28] And he says this, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. The blessed hope, that phrase is used several times in the scriptures.

It's talking about the return of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came once, and he's coming again. And we are looking forward to that. And the grace of God in our lives has us looking to that blessed hope, that future coming, as a glorious thing.

what's going to happen at that second coming? It's a word that begins with J. Judgment.

Jesus is coming, and he's going to judge the world. Now, when you go, has anybody ever, well, don't raise your hand, but has anybody ever stood before a judge?

Is that something you look forward to? Typically not, right? We don't look forward to a day where we have to stand before a judge. But for the believer, Jesus returning is something that we look forward to, because he has given us eternal life.

[42 : 43] We get to escape the judgment. But it will be a dreadful day for those who have rejected them, for those who have not received him. So we look forward to the blessed hope and glorious appearing.

That word appearing is this word, it's an interesting word because it seems like a fairly basic word, but this word, the word is epiphania. And if you think of an English word, has anybody ever heard of the, there's like a Christian tradition of celebrating the epiphany?

In fact, it usually happens in January. And it actually is a Christian tradition, I'm not actually sure, I think Orthodox and maybe Catholic and maybe some others will celebrate the epiphany, but it's actually celebrating the time when the Magi came and saw the Savior.

And so the word epiphany just means appearing. And so there was the initial appearing, in fact, this word, I don't think I got to it yet, the only time this word is ever used is in talking about Jesus Christ. Once it's talked about his initial appearing when he was born, and the other five times it talks about his coming again, his appearing again. 2 Timothy 1 verse 10 says this, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

[44 : 15] It's that word epiphany. And then the other times it's all talking about, for example, 1 Timothy 6.14, that you keep this commandment without spot or blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing.

So for us believers, his appearing will be a glorious day that we all look forward to. And so the grace of God in our lives makes that a very positive thing, that we look forward to his appearing.

Now, with the time that we have left, we'll kind of finish this up with a little bit of a grammar lesson. And this verse, I guess, has caused a little bit of consternation and debate over hundreds of years about this phrase, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now, the King James, which, you know, most of our translations are fairly new. For most of having the written word of God, the King James has been the primary Bible that people have had.

The King James renders it this way, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

[45 : 41] Christ. And when you read that, it kind of sounds like it's talking about two people, doesn't it? And the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

And are there people out there who would love for this verse to be talking about two people?

Because there's been a debate from the very beginning, from the beginning of Christianity, the first century to today, that has raged.

Is Jesus really God? I mean, would God really become a man anyway? I mean, that's hard to believe, that God himself, the creator of the universe, would become a man?

That's bizarre. I mean, what kind of idiot would believe such a thing? And you can find in the writings of some of our founding fathers, actually, who said things like that.

What kind of moron would believe that God, the creator of the universe, would become a man? And so, there are many people who refuse to believe that. And so, they look at things like this and they say, aha!

[46 : 56] See? It says in the King James, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Those are two separate people.

When the Bible talks about somebody coming again, who's it talking about? Jesus, right? Not the Father. Not the Father and the Son, but the Son. So, years ago, probably, I think this is in the 1800s, there was a guy, his name was Granville Sharp, and he looked into this and spent a lot of time studying the grammar here, and actually came up with a grammar rule that's called the Granville Sharp rule.

And it's actually, you know, when you explain it, it makes a lot of sense, even if you're not big on Greek or even English grammar. You know, how many of us struggle with English grammar? But the, let me see if I can find this, the more literal rendering of this in the Greek would read the great God and Savior.

Did I get that right? Let's see if I got it. Sorry, I just found it.

the, our great God and Savior. That's the literal. The, our great God and Savior. Does that make, that doesn't sound right in English at all, does it? So, in this case, we have a definite article.

[48 : 40] Right? A definite article is the. An indefinite article would be like a, right? So, you have the thing or you have a thing. One is kind of a generic. And when you use the, you're talking about a specific thing.

You talk about, you know, a flood, right? A flood, it could be any flood. But, especially if you're talking about the Bible and you talk about the flood, what are you talking about?

The flood of Noah's day. Everybody knows, even if there's no context, except for maybe the Bible, right? Or maybe you live in a community where there was the great flood of, you know, 1823, right? And everybody knows that the whole area was flooded. Or, for example, in Xenia, right, we have the tornado from 70-something. And so in Xenia, they talk about the tornado, right?

And everybody knows which one, even with a little context. But if you talk about a tornado, it's, you know, unclear. So you have definite articles and indefinite articles.

[49 : 40] So the Greek is the same way. But Granville Sharp, he did a study of the whole Bible and also ancient Greek writings. So when you kind of study biblical Greek, you can study the Bible, but then to help you understand words, especially words that are infrequently used in the Bible, you look to other sources.

You might read Josephus or, I'm trying to think of some of the other people who have writings.

There's quite a bit of writings from that time period which you can study the Greek.

But he found that there's this rule and it seems to apply to every language, including English, the one that we speak, Greek and ancient Greek. And it says this, basically the Granville Sharps rule, and this is a guy named James White who kind of summarized this, states that when you have two nouns, our two nouns here are the great God and Savior, right, which are not proper names like Paul or Timothy, which are describing a person.

And the two nouns are connected by the word and, and the first noun has the article the, while the second does not, then both nouns are always referring to the same person. There are zero exceptions to this rule.

So what's an example? You might say, well, last week I met with the founder and president of Tesla.

[51 : 11] Tesla. Is that one person or two people? It sounds like one person, right? But if you said, last week I met with the founder and the president of Tesla, it could be a little confusing, but there's definitely room for that being two people.

But with that first one, there's not really room, is there? You have one definite article. You're talking about the same person, but they have two different titles. That's what's going on here.

So when it says, we look for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, it's talking about our great God and Savior.

Jesus Christ is our great God and he's our Savior. He's both. And we're looking forward to his appearing. There's another verse that uses the same kind of phrase and it has the same grammar rule.

2 Peter, the very first verse of 2 Peter, it says this, Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[52 : 30] So, those who would try to kind of confuse people with grammar to try to prove that Jesus really isn't God, and if you have a Jehovah's witness come to your door, and I'm sure most of us have, and if you haven't, I'm sure it's coming, they will open up the Bible and they will point to some of these different things and try to bring confusion.

And there are plenty of verses in the Bible that point to Jesus being God. There's actually fairly few that say it directly, maybe a half a dozen, evidence, but there's overwhelming evidence that imply strongly or indirectly, indirect evidence we'll call it, for the deity of Christ.

Remember that Jesus said, before Abraham was, I am. I was like, that's a funny phrase. Why would somebody say that before Abraham was, I am?

Except the Jews who were listening to him, they picked up rocks to throw it at him. Why would they do that because of his bad grammar? Because they knew what he was saying, right?

Because God, through the burning bush, told Abraham, tell them that I am has sent you. How dare you call yourself I am? I know what you mean by that.

[53 : 59] There's evidence all over the scriptures that Jesus is God, our creator. Let's finish up. 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.

He gave himself up for us. That's why we ought to live this way. He redeemed us from our sin, from every lawless deed. We have been redeemed. We've been purchased. And so we don't have to live this way, but we ought to, and it is our privilege to, and we ought to love to, and we should be zealous for good works.

Zealous. You know, we have this word in English, when we call somebody a zealot, oh, they're a zealot. Is that like a positive thing or a negative thing? Typically a negative thing. But when it comes to good works, we should all be zealots.

You know, what will people call you? Oh, that puritanical whatever, that Puritan, you know, they're goody two shoes, whatever it might be, depending on the context.

People will despise you just for living an upright life. They will hate you for it. But we ought to be zealots for good works. He finishes up with this.

[55 : 19] Speak these things, exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you. And people will. People will despise you. Not only for saying that we ought to live an upright life, but just because you do.

Isn't that bizarre? People will despise you because you live an upright life. This morning we were talking about Cain and Abel. Cain, they both brought sacrifices. God received Abel's sacrifice and he rejected Cain's.

And what did Cain do? I mean, there's no indication that Abel said, ha, ha, ha, or anything like that. I mean, maybe it happened. But Abel, or Cain, killed his brother Abel.

Why? Well, it seems because he made him look bad. Right? So if you just live an upright life, people will despise you.

But living that life is worth the risk, isn't it? Amen? Amen? Let's finish up there. We're over time.
[56 : 25] Does anybody have any comments or questions that they really want to ask? And if they do, raise your hand and we'll get you a microphone. You can use this one. If not, we can go ahead and finish up.

Anybody got a burning question or comment? All right. We'll finish up there then. Let's end in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for your word.

I am so grateful, Father, that we don't have to live a godly, upright life in order to benefit from your grace, in order to receive eternal life.

But I do pray, Father, that for me and for everybody in this room, that we would be motivated by your love, inspired by your sacrifice, that just as you laid down your life for us, that we would not only just check off boxes, for the things that we ought to do, but we would live lives just like yours, where we would go the extra mile, where we would lay our lives down and sacrifice for others around us, just like you did for us, that we might be like you, like our Father.

Continue to work in us every day for us to be like you. In Jesus' name, amen. All right. Thanks, everybody. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.