

Titus 2 - Grace that Forms us

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[0:00] And I'm going to read our chapter together. And then I'm going to pray. And then I will talk a bit.

! And then we'll pray. And then whatever surprise we've got at the end. Chris and I just looked at each other and went, we don't know. So we could have donkey rides. Tombola. We could have... Anything else would be a surprise to you? Karaoke would be a big surprise. Jesus' return wouldn't be a surprise because we're expecting it.

Amen? Not today we are. You've got to live in the light of eternity. All right. Good. Titus chapter 2. Paul writes, But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith and love and in steadfastness. Older women, likewise, are to be reverent in behaviour, not slanderous or slaves to much wine.

[1:08] They are to teach what is good and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works and in your teaching show integrity, dignity and sound speech that cannot be condemned so that an opponent may be put to shame having nothing evil to say about us.

Bond servants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything. They are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Declare these things, exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you. Father, we come to you this morning, Lord, and we come to you as a people who are far more loved than we will know, Lord, and yet far more needy than we will ever know.

[2:40] Lord, we are thankful this morning, Lord, for this grace that has appeared. Lord, and we thank you, Lord, for those who call you Father, for those who have called on your name, Lord, you have saved.

Lord, and so we stand or we sit here this morning in that, clothed in your righteousness, not in our own. And Lord, we tackle this passage and we're thankful for it.

And yet, Lord, we know that there's some difficulties here for us and we pray this morning, Lord, that you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear. Lord, we pray that your spirit would be amongst us, Lord, and that the words from this page, Lord, would be impactful for us.

Lord, it wouldn't be my words, Lord, but your word that is the thing that we remember. Lord, we pray that you would challenge our hearts, exhort us, but also encourage us. Lord, we don't want to leave here, Lord, downbeaten or discouraged.

Lord, we want to have a sober view of ourselves and yet, Lord, also we want to be able to rejoice and be joyful in what is coming next. And so, Lord, help us, we pray.

[3:45] In Jesus' name, Amen. So last week, we began this series in Titus talking about something that happens every February in Yosemite National Park.

It's on the screen there in the photo. It's called The Horse Tale Fall and it runs down this waterfall runs down the side of Al Capitan and every year when the sun hits it right, this ordinary waterfall, although beautiful, for a brief moment is turned into a waterfall that glows like fire.

And what was always just a normal waterfall, however spectacular it was, changes in that light. And that image is a helpful way for us to think about grace.

Because as we live our lives, we live our lives in kind of like the river of the ordinary faithful. We're busy, we're active, we're trying to be good Christians, but the light of Christ's grace shines on us and when that happens, when we understand why we are doing the ordinary, suddenly what was ordinary becomes radiant.

And last week we talked about how we are encouraged and exhorted to live our ordinary lives in light of what God is doing for us and His grace brings meaning to that.

[5:26] And so last week as we saw Titus 1, we saw God's undeserved goodness to us and favor to us gives us clarity about who we are and what we're doing.

We're more than doing the ordinary. The things that we do, the ordinary things that we do, bring stability in the present but also hope for the future.

And now in chapter 2, Paul kind of goes deeper and he shows us that grace doesn't just forgive us and set us up right as Christians, but it also gives us a specific course on our lives and all for eternity.

And how the ordinary things that we do each and every day are really setting that course, are really helping us on that course.

They're doing something that are mounting up and accumulating for us something bigger than the ordinary parts. And so the thing that Paul is going to talk about is how grace forms us in the present and shapes our character and how it transforms ordinary people.

[6:39] And like, I don't want to insult you this morning but we're ordinary people. kids. But look, how does grace transform ordinary people like you and me into a community that reflects Christ which is extraordinary?

How do we get from just being ordinary to being a community, a church that is extraordinary? And that's kind of the big idea of this passage because we all bring our ordinary stuff.

Let's just talk about like church on a Sunday morning. We just bring our ordinary stuff. Like we're just trying to be faithful, aren't we? You know, like we're working. Seems like we're working all the time, doesn't it?

You know, we're working and when we're not at work, there's stuff to do, isn't there? And sometimes that kind of ordinary, taking the bins out, taking the kids to their classes, you know, doing this, going there, doing that, whatever, sometimes we get bogged down in that and the question is when we bring that kind of ordinary stuff, we're showing up to church and hopefully, you know, we're showing up to church with some expectation of what God's going to do here but we're bringing that ordinary stuff.

How does God transform that ordinary stuff into a community like we are so that when people come in from the road and go, there's something extraordinary that's happening here. This is different than a whole bunch of people just taking the bins out on a Tuesday morning.

[8:11] If it's not a Tuesday morning for you, that's not a notice for you now to change. That's just, don't come back to me next week. You said it was Tuesday morning. I put out Tuesday morning, they didn't come. So Paul is going to describe here in this chapter what healthy Christian lives look like.

And he's going to talk about older men. He's going to talk about older women. And it is a coincidence that it's Mother's Day. This is not a setup, I promise you.

He's going to talk about younger women and he's going to talk about younger men. He's going to talk about leaders and he's going to talk about masters and employees. And if you read it quickly as we just have, it might feel kind of like a moral checklist.

that you kind of pin up on your fridge or the fridge of your mind at least and you kind of, well, I'm not doing too badly. Right? And sometimes it does feel like that.

But I think Paul is doing something a little bit deeper here. He's showing us what happens again when grace shines on just the ordinary waterfalls of our life.

[9:21] And so let's start with verse one with the idea that grace creates a different kind of community. Like you can't go anywhere in the world other than church where the ideal is what Paul is painting for us this morning.

Okay? So you can't go and join a tennis club where grace is the center. You can't go and join, what other clubs they do? It's the only club I know, tennis club.

Taekwondo club, football club. It's getting physical. Or cooking, knitting, whatever. Where grace, bridge.

Where grace is the center. It's grace-centric. And Paul is saying, look, there is a different kind of community that exists. It's called the body of Christ.

It's called the church. And it should be completely different than the ordinary. It doesn't discount the ordinary. It doesn't ignore the ordinary. It shines a light on the ordinary so that when it does, it becomes extraordinary.

[10:32] So here's what he says. He says, as for you, teach what accords to sound doctrine. In other words, Titus is supposed to lead differently from the false teachers that he's been speaking about in chapter one.

That's at the back of what he's been saying. There is no chapter break in the original, right? So he's going from chapter one to chapter two, to chapter three. And you'll see next week that chapter three leads on from chapter two.

And so exactly the same way, Titus is supposed to lead differently from the false teachers that he had been described to in chapter one. They were speaking with confusion and distorted truth.

Titus is supposed to teach sound doctrine. Circle that word sound. It is mentioned four times in this letter. It is important that we understand what it means.

Most would assume that it means correct doctrine, correct? That's funny, isn't it? Most would assume it means correct doctrine. It doesn't. Most of us would reach for our theology books.

[11:30] We shouldn't. The actual word comes from the Greek word that means healthy. In fact, we get our English word hygiene from it. And so, if you want to see how it's first used in the New Testament, Luke chapter five, we get this story where the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling at the disciples.

No news there. And they said, why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? And Jesus answered, those who are sound, those who are well, those who are healthy.

That's the same word. Have no need of a physician but those who are sick. So this word means well. It means healthy. The story of the prodigal son in Luke chapter 15 is used again.

The son returns home. The servant explains to the older brother what's going on and he says, your brother has come. Your father has killed the fattened calf because he's received him back and here's the word, healthy, safe and sound.

So Paul isn't simply talking about teaching that is technically correct or intellectually precise. He's talking about teaching that produces spiritual health.

[12:46] In the same way that healthy food nourishes the body and makes it grow strong, healthy doctrine, nourishes the soul and helps people flourish in Christ. It's about teaching what leads to lives that are whole, stable and transformed.

And that's Paul's instruction to Titus. I want you to teach that way. And so, this is a teaching that is connected to life. And so, Paul shows us then almost as an example, almost as a case study, if you like.

Let me tell you what that looks like. Titus, when you get into the pulpit, this is what I want you to preach. And so, he starts addressing older men and younger women and younger women and younger men. And he highlights, actually, in each one that you have a danger.

And you might want to write that down in the first person. I have a danger. Look, some of you are already getting wrapped up in am I old or am I young?

Yeah? Because you're worried. Some of you know you're old. Right? Some of you need to wake up. If you're asleep, you're old. I did look at Dave, yeah.

[14:06] Only because he's at the front just having a little nap. He wasn't having a nap. He's writing. I don't want to do him a disservice,

right? So, some of you are like, I don't know whether I fit into the old category or the younger category.

Don't worry about that. Like, I don't think there's a cut off. Okay? You know, like Proverbs talks about someone who's old has got gray hair. Okay? So, what does Andy do?

Right? Right? So, I don't think there's a line that you cross. You wake up one morning and you're like, oh, I'm in the old category. I think that happens over time where your muscles just stop working.

But look, he highlights dangers of each category. All right? And you can go and think about that in the life group. Where do you fit? What constitutes old?

What constitutes young? But in the first, the first one is he's talking to older men and the danger is the danger of hardening hearts. And so, maybe if you think you're an older man, then maybe you want to write, I have the danger of hardening my heart.

[15:22] He says, older men, verse 2, are to be sober-minded. That is right thinking about yourself. Sober. Sober-minded. It's right thinking about yourself, right thinking about God, right thinking about others.

That's what it means. Dignified. That means worthy of respect. Self-controlled. Which literally means not stupid.

It means sensible. Right? You're not walking along the river like a younger man might and jump in. Okay?

You're just sensible. Sound in faith and again, spiritually healthy. And they do all of this in love and in steadfastness. So, look, Paul starts with older men and the command to teach these things means that these things don't automatically come with age.

Do you get that? Paul says to Titus, to the older men, there's a specific message that you need to teach older men. And you need to teach them because, look, they just don't appear.

[16:34] They don't appear like your grey hair appears. Right? They don't appear with age. They have to be taught this. And what Paul is describing, of course, is men who are stable.

Men who are not ruled by impulse. Men whose lives have been shaped by years of walking with Christ. This is the picture of spiritual maturity. A life that has been slowly shaped by grace over many years.

And the church desperately needs those men. We need older men whose lives, say, following Jesus for decades produces something beautiful like a firefall.

And so, one of the questions why Paul would emphasize those things over some other things that he might have highlighted is a really good question to ask.

Why those things? Out of all the things that Paul could have said about older men, teach older men this. And it's simply this, that Paul's observations are that when men age, there is the temptation towards two major things.

[17:41] Cynicism and disengagement. Cynicism and disengagement. Nothing's changed. I've been here so long, nothing's changed.

Cynicism. I've been here so long, I don't need to be engaged. I don't need to do that disengagement. He's speaking to men who have lived long enough to know that life rarely turns out the way you imagined it would.

When you're young, life feels full of possibility. There's almost nothing that you can't imagine is going to work, right?

You assume things are going to work out. You assume your plans will succeed. You assume relationships will stay strong. You assume the future will cooperate with your dreams. But as years go by, reality begins to press in, doesn't it?

Maybe your career plateaus or ends earlier than expected. Maybe the friendships you thought you'd have forever begin to fade.

[19:00] Maybe your body doesn't work the way it used to. Well, certainly your body doesn't work the way it used to. Maybe your business has failed.

Maybe your marriage has struggled. Maybe you have children who have drifted from the faith. You didn't imagine any of that when you were young. Years spent chasing something that ultimately didn't materialize.

Older men often carry a lifetime of stories and not all of them are the kind you would have written for yourself. And that's why the temptation in later years can be cynicism.

Like you can begin to think, well, nothing really changes. People always disappoint me. It's not really worth trying anymore. And some men, not all men, some men slowly withdraw.

And that's why Paul says to Titus, you need to teach them. Some men become hardened or they become critical or they become emotionally distant.

[20:02] They stop believing their faithfulness, the waterfall faithfulness of the ordinary everyday life actually matters because they've just been doing it for so long. But Paul here paints a bit of a different picture because instead of cynicism, he calls older men to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

In other words, the disappointments of life happen to everyone. But when grace shines on those disappointments, they don't harden their heart, they deepen it.

And that's Paul's point. Paul's point is that actually, if and when, and the idea is when, when you come together as ordinary people, you've got a group of people, the older men, who are looked at like the older, the younger men can look at that life and say, if he can still trust in God after everything he's been through, after the monotony of the ordinary for 50, for 60, for 70, for 80, for 90, we don't have 90 years on here, then if they can do that for such a long time, maybe I can too.

And it's not because they're brilliant, it's because of God's grace. And this is the vision that Paul has. Not men who've become hardened by disappointment, but by men who've become deepened by grace.

And if you've ever been around, if you've ever been around older men, they do fall into two categories, don't they?

[21:44] I was blessed a few years ago and I tell you why I was, I just still remember it. I had a coffee with a local guy and he'd been a Christian like longer than I'd been alive.

Yeah, longer than I'd been alive. And you know, some people are just like, you just want that to last a long time. He's a guy who'd been through lots and lots, he'd lost his wife, he'd lost his second wife, his church just imploded during COVID.

And you just think, but he was so gracious. The reality of life will either harden your heart or deepen your heart.

One of the two. And so this is a message for old men. Not old men, older men. And then Paul goes on to speak about older women.

And he highlights the danger of relational destruction. And I've used the word destruction purposefully. He says, older women likewise.

[22:54] And look, this isn't like, oh, you've got this older men problem. And in addition to all of those things that men struggle with, you've also got these problems that women struggle with.

He's not saying that. He said, I want to instruct them likewise. So instruct them in the same way.

Right? And again, notice that the emphasis of this kind of life, the emphasis is on the kind of life that grace produces.

Old women likewise are to be reverent in behavior. That word reverent means to be able to fit into something. Right? The idea is that the older woman should be comfortable being an older woman. And try not to behave like a younger woman. Paul knows something about a human nature, doesn't he?

And he's addressing specific dangers that older women might face. And when enough kind of relational wounds accumulate over time, the temptation can be actually bitterness expressed through words.

[24:17] And this is what Paul is highlighting. Highlighting all the problems that older women and older men face. He's just highlighting a few. And Paul mentions that older women here should not be slanderous.

So these are issues, challenges, temptations of the mouth, of the tongue, of speech. And look, this isn't an invitation for anyone who is not an old woman to go ahead and slander.

Like, oh well, if it's just older women, then I can just go ahead. That's not what Paul is saying. He's saying that there is a specific danger for older women in this area.

And the Greek word, if you really want to drill down on what Paul is saying, it's the same root word as the same devil, as the word devil. The one who accuses and tears down, that's the idea.

Right? So he's the father of lies, right? Satan is. And so what Paul is saying is, look, when you are bitter, when you're slanderous, you're actually trying to tear down and accuse rather than build up.

[25:25] It's the idea of using words to damage reputations or relationships. When people are wounded relationally, they sometimes begin to process that pain from the past through criticism, through gossip, harsh speech.

And words become a way to vent disappointment. Like, my life hasn't turned out the way I thought it was. But Paul's vision here for old women is much more beautiful than that.

Instead of becoming voices of criticism, he says that they should be reverent in behavior, not slanderous, nor slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good.

And so Paul isn't diminishing old women at all. He's actually elevating their influence. And of course in the first century, this would have been a crazy proposition.

What is he saying in short? He's saying old women, you matter to the body of Christ. You absolutely matter to the body of Christ. He says your voice matters so much that it must be shaped by grace.

[26:40] You don't understand the influence that you do have. And so use your influence well. In other words, the grace of God can take all of the relational experiences that you've had, both the joyful ones and the painful ones, and turn them into wisdom that blesses others.

The older woman shaped by grace doesn't become cynical about people. She becomes compassionate for people. She has learned how fragile relationships can be.

So she becomes someone who builds up rather than tears down. And her words carry weight.

Why? Because they come from a life of waterfall faithfulness.

And so instead of becoming critical and bitter, those words Paul says in verse four are to train the young women.

Verse four. So that the life of faithfulness, grace turns those years of relationships, both the broken ones and the beautiful ones into something radiant that blesses others.

[27:51] Fireful. And then in that, in kind of like almost straight off the back of that, Paul addresses this third group, younger women.

And he says, look, there is a danger for younger women in terms of cultural pressure, conformity, shall we say. Like the world is telling you you've got to be like this, you've got to do this, you've got to be this kind of young woman, you've got to be this kind of mom, or you've got to be this kind of wife, or you've got to be this kind of business person.

And Paul says, look, I know that there is a pressure from the world on you to conform. And so he says there at the end of verse four, to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

And look, this isn't limiting what women can do. This isn't Paul's instruction that all women should work at home. Can we make that clear? This is about recognizing the pressure.

In this context, what I think it is, is the pressure of having a family in early adulthood. And there's a pressure, isn't there? I'm looking over this side. There you go.

[29:20] Like, we know that pressure. Some of us know that pressure.

Laurie and I were married. I'm going to get this wrong now. I shouldn't have said anything. We were married. Can I just say that? 20 and 21.

Yeah. Thanks. She just clarified that. Did you notice that? That she was younger. And over the next decade, we had four children. Like, it's safe to say that responsibility arrived before maturity finished growing.

And that's the problem of being a young adult. Right? We have all of this energy. And you think you don't have any energy. Well, you have loads of energy.

And we have all of this energy and we do all of this stuff. But quite often, maturity hasn't finished growing in us yet. And there's an issue there. That's one of the tensions of young adulthood.

You're building a family while you're still trying to figure out your own life. You're still figuring out who you are and suddenly you're responsible for someone else. And they don't care that you haven't finished growing.

[30:35] Do they? Four o'clock in the morning, they're yelling from their bedroom or whatever they're doing. They don't mind at all about you. So you're learning how to be a wife while you're still learning how to be an adult.

You're raising children while you're still discovering your own identity. You're trying to build a life, trying to build a career, trying to pay the bills, trying to nurture a marriage and somehow keep your faith alive in the middle of all of that.

And then the pastor comes along and says, well, you know, you should have your quiet time first thing in the morning. And I remember having this conversation with someone.

It's like, as soon as I get up, they know. They can smell that I'm awake. And it doesn't matter if I get up at four o'clock in the morning, they know, they're up. And we get that.

Of course we do. The pressure is enormous. And look, we're not short of advice, are we? There's a million voices, probably more than that, telling you how to do it.

[31:49] Like, we are not a society that is lacking information, are we? Right? Social media tells you what the perfect family looks like. That's cultural pressure. Parenting books tell you the right way to raise your kids.

And by the way, if you go to a bookstore, if they still exist today, there's contradictory books next to each other on how to raise your kids. Culture tells you what success should look like, and that's exactly why Paul describes younger women in the way that he does.

He's not piling on pressure because you've got enough of that. He's pointing to the grace of God that trains us. Grace meets us in the chaos of early adulthood. Grace meets us in the sleepless nights and in the tight finances and in relational tension.

Grace begins forming something beautiful in us. Not perfection, but faithfulness. And so Paul envisages here the developing faithfulness of younger women being lit up by the grace and wisdom of older women.

And then in verse 6, one of the strongest words that Paul has for Titus to say to younger men. And the danger that younger men face is impulse.

[33:18] Meaning, I want to do this, I want to do that, I want to do this, I want to do that, impulse. He says likewise, verse 6, in the same way, urge, the Greek word is *parakaleo*, it means to call alongside.

If you want a modern way of putting that, take the younger men, put them in a headlock, don't let them out until they've learned self-control.

That's probably in one of the modern translations right there. Call alongside the younger men to be self-controlled, that's it.

There's no other verse, there's no other phrase, that's the sum total of what Paul says to Timothy to teach, one primary command, self-control.

And honestly, it covers a lot, like there's a lot in those two words. Young men have all of the energy, all of the ambition, all of the desire, but none of the maturity.

[34:28] That's a problem, that's called a firework. energy without direction, ambition without wisdom, desire without discipline, and Paul knows that the great need for young women is discipline shaped by grace.

And then he says, verse 7, show yourself. Titus, you're not getting away with it either. Don't think that you could just stand in the pulpit and yell stuff at people. This is for you as well.

In all respects, be a model of good works. And in your teaching, show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about, what's those two words, that word?

Us. Paul is saying, look, as the leader there in Crete, you have the opportunity for people to say evil about the people that you are ministering to.

It's an us, not a you. And then he says bond servants, and I haven't really camped too much out on this verse because I think some of it is a fairly unique situation for the church in the first century.

[35:45] You could say employees or not. Like, you've got in the first century, just to paint the picture, you've got masters and servants who were working normally to pay off a debt in their house.

And they're getting saved. Whole households are getting saved. And they're having to figure out how to do that well together. But you're my master.

It's more than just a boss, right? This is my master. And they're trying to figure that out in church. So he says, bond servants, you're supposed to be submissive to your own masters and everything. They are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God, our Savior. And when you step back and look at the picture, this is not just a waterfall.

Again, this is a firefall. You've got older men providing stability. You've got older women offering wisdom. You've got young families learning faithfulness.

[36:48] You've got younger men growing in maturity. You've got leaders acting in integrity. You've got no worldly hierarchy. That's what I think it's saying in verse 9. This is what the grey-shaped church looks like.

Not perfect people, because none of us are perfect, right? You've got ordinary people living ordinary lives. Slowly being transformed by grace.

And here's the key question. Where does that come from? How do we get there, if you like? Where does that kind of life come from? Well, Paul answers that in the very next verse, and he says, verse 11, for, so that tells you it's answering something, it's doing something, is a reason for the sentence. For the grace of God has appeared. The grace of God has appeared. This is the heart of the passage, and honestly, it's probably the heart of the letter.

The grace of God has appeared. Everything before this is fruit. This is the root. And all of the above that we've just read, the requirement for that to take place, it requires a work of grace in our hearts.

[38:08] grace in the passage then to the end of verse 14, links gift and task. Like, we're hugely task-orientated people, aren't we?

Like, we are always doing, doing, doing, doing. If you was to go onto Google and maybe you have and you typed in like, help me be effective or whatever, there's a ton of ways that you can be more effective or productive and have to-do lists coming out of your ears and ways that you can manage your time.

And I know because I've searched for them. I have about three subscriptions to them. Paul here is, from this passage all the way through to verse 14, he's linking gift with task.

Oh, sorry, gift and task with the church's new identity, who we are. The grace of God has appeared. For this to happen, for this firefall moment to take place, it is not because we've somehow, you know, we've got more effective at doing church and we've got lovely shiny signs on the roundabout and we've got like beautiful made coffee as we come in.

All of that is really super helpful and really, really important, especially the coffee part. but unless God's grace appears, can I ask you really, what's the point?

[39:43] Unless we're allowing our ordinary lives of faithfulness and we're bringing those in and we're ready, we're allowing them to be transformed by grace so that they become more than just the thing, but they add up to something.

like why are we here, what are we doing? And so look down at verse 14 where he calls the church a people for his own possession.

That's what you are, that's what I am. We are a people that belong to God. That's our identity and since that is true, Paul's emphasis is since that is true and it's not because we've really done anything, it's because God's grace has appeared.

So since that is true, we should act like that. But here in verse 11 he anchors that in the grace of God that has appeared and Paul is talking about not an abstract idea, he's talking about Jesus. He's saying that Jesus has appeared. grace is a person, grace appeared when the Son of God stepped into humanity, into history.

[41:09] What did that look like? Well, can I be honest and just say that that looked quite ordinary, didn't it? Like I know he did some pretty spectacular things.

I know he fed 5,000 a couple of times, he walked on water, he calmed the storm, he did some amazing things. But he also sat down with sinners and had dinner. He went walking around the countryside with 12 guys that didn't know anything.

Right? He had just an ordinary life that was yielded to what God wanted. God and his life of ordinary faithfulness.

Of course, he had a mission and a plan of God on his life that he came to do. He lived the life that we failed to live. He died the death that we deserved.

deserved. And he rose from the dead victorious. This is what Paul means when grace appeared. He didn't stop doing the ordinary. He didn't say, quite frankly, that's below me.

[42:26] What did he do? On the night he was betrayed, he sat down and he washed people's feet. If that's not a definition of ordinary, I don't know what is. look what it says in verse 12.

It says that grace enables the task. So, training us. So, grace has appeared, bringing salvation for, training us. That's the first thing that grace does.

It trains us. It doesn't just forgive us, it does, but it shapes us. It teaches us to say no to sin and yes to God. No to sin and yes to a different way of life.

It trains us. What does it do? It trains us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age. That's the summary, if you like, of the first ten verses.

So, not only does grace train us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live godly lives, it also, verse 13, brings hope. If we really understand grace, it brings hope.

[43:37] We should be, can I just say, we should be the most joyful people on earth. Yet we're not, are we? We should be, but we're not.

Paul says, grace teaches us how to be. He says, we are waiting, verse 13. How many of you are waiting this morning? I'm not talking about waiting for your children or waiting for your husbands to get ready or whatever.

Waiting. What are we waiting for? We're waiting for the blessed hope. The blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good work.

So Christ came once in grace. Think about that. John says in John chapter 1 that the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The perfect son of God stepped into a broken world. He lived again the life that we could never have lived. That was the appearance of grace, God's undeserved favor breaking into history.

[44:54] Salvation was secured, sins were forgiven, the door was open for every person to be reconciled to God. The first coming of Christ was merciful, patient and redemptive.

And Paul says that he's going to come again in glory. One day. One day the world will not just see grace, they will see justice. And we need both.

We need fulfillment. We need restoration. we need a day where every tear will be wiped away, where every wrong will be made right.

Every sinner who's been redeemed will stand fully transformed before the Lord, which means you're going to make it. No more waiting, no more imperfections, no more halfway measures.

The same grace, Paul says, that met you in the middle of your ordinary life will be made complete in the full revelation of Christ's glory. We often say that grace and glory are like bookends, right?

[46:04] The first coming of Jesus is God's mercy reaching out, and the second coming of Jesus is God's kingdom fully extended. And what started in grace will be finished in glory.

And that hope guarantees that the work of grace that was begun in your life will not be wasted.

Those ordinary moments are not wasted. So when Paul says that the grace of God appeared in Jesus and Jesus will come again in glory, what is he doing?

He's showing us a timeline of transformation. He's saying that God saved you here. He poured out his grace on you here. And guess what? He's going to cash in later on.

And in the meantime, there is this transforming process. And every ordinary faithful act today matters because it's caught up in that divine story.

Not perfection, not people pretending to be holy. This is broken people being remade, flawed people being refined, ordinary people being made into the radiant light of Christ.

[47:13] And then he says what I think is really super powerful. Right at the end he says, grace doesn't just save you.

This is what Paul is saying. Grace doesn't just save you and leave you sitting on the couch hoping life will somehow work it out. Grace doesn't do that. Grace also doesn't leave you on the couch looking back on your life regretting what's happened.

Grace changes you so that you are zealous and that word is excited or enthusiastic like I'm picturing like Harley the dog we have at home.

It's my daughter's dog. He's excited. He has this, what do you call it? He calls it a smile. It looks like he's snarling but he's not snarling. He's smiling when he sees you and he just goes nuts.

He's running around the house trying to find something to bring you. He has too much emotional capacity so he's got to bring you a gift like a shoe or a toy and shove it in your face.

[48:30] He's excited. None of us want to be that on a Sunday morning and that's going to get you in trouble. But this is the word that Paul uses.

Paul uses Paul is saying is that if you have encountered this grace, if you have encountered Jesus, if you've met Jesus, you can't help but move.

You can't help but be excited. You can't help but be enthusiastic to jump on that timeline of transformation and go, whatever you've got for me, I'm in. And be excited about that.

Regardless of whether you're an older man or an older woman, a younger man or a younger woman, or something that you're not too sure about. Paul says, look, if you've encountered this person, if you've encountered Jesus for yourself, your ordinary days, your Monday mornings, your relationships, your work, your parenting, they become the arena in which God's mercy flows through you to others.

And if you think you can claim the grace of God without it producing this kind of life, in your soul, with this kind of fire in your soul, then you've misunderstood grace. Let's be clear that grace always leads to action, always.

[49:57] grace. If you think you can claim the mercy of God and the forgiveness of Jesus and the power of the Spirit and then just sit on the sidelines of life and wait for it to happen to you and watch the world go by, I would argue in the strongest possible way that you have misunderstood grace.

And perhaps you haven't and I would wonder whether you've actually met Jesus. Grace is not a spiritual sofa.

Grace doesn't whisper you can stay comfortable while everyone else suffers or struggles. Grace is a fire that makes you zealous for good works.

Grace. That's why Paul says that we are redeemed for that purpose. Paul says elsewhere that you are created for good works.

Not an option, not a suggestion, not part of a menu that we can choose from. Grace demands that you love, that you serve, that you live faithfully, even in the ordinary, even when it costs, even when no one is applauding.

[51:09] Why? Because you are saved for that purpose. That you will be and then he said, verse 15, declare these things.

Good. Job done. Declare these things. Exhort and rebuke with all authority and let no one disregard you.

Let's pray together. Father, thank you for your word. Lord, we recognize we recognize the tough and deliberate things that we have read this morning.

Lord, we acknowledge Lord that you speak to your people and we want to thank you Lord that you speak to us today.

Lord, we pray Lord that we would be protected, that you would protect us against that familiar and all too often voice that we hear in our head that we've heard it but we don't do anything about it on Monday morning.

[52:35] Lord, we pray Lord that you would make us zealous for good works. Whether we are older or younger in whatever stage of life we find ourselves in.

Lord, we pray Lord that you would use our ordinary, our ordinary faithfulness. Lord, as we understand grace illuminating what we are doing each and every day, Lord, help us to see what we do and to actually do what you've instructed as part of this big elaborate story of transforming us from when grace appeared to when glory will come.

Lord, we thank you, Lord, that you haven't left us alone. Lord, we thank you, Lord, that you empower us by your spirit to live the way that you've called us to live.

And so we pray, Lord, for more of your spirit, Lord, more of your power and your might, Lord, more of the way that we might actually live this out without actually, you know, burning out or living in fear.

Lord, we want to thank you this morning, Lord, that we are a people called your own possession. We belong to you. Lord, and so help us, we pray, to walk like people that do.

[54:04] Lord, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.