

This Changes Everything: How the Gospel Transforms Us

The good news is the foundation for good works, and the gospel is the good news connected to two appearances of God on earth in Jesus Christ. One writer called earth the visited planet. This planet has been visited by God himself, in the person of Jesus, and it will again be visited by God himself as Jesus Christ. This is communicated in Titus 2:11-15, along with the moral implications for those who believe these things.

Christians believe that the grace of God has already appeared in the life and death of Jesus Christ. The apostle John said about Jesus, “from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace”. The grace of God appeared among us, embodied in Jesus. Jesus’ life and death made the grace of God visible. Jesus went about doing good. He did good to the poor, the weak and the sick. He also did good by obeying every law of God, always, and doing this for the morally and spiritually poor, weak and sick. Jesus’s perfect righteousness was an act of kindness for sinners, because his righteousness is credited to sinners who trust in his righteousness as their only hope to be declared righteous by God. He lived the life we should live, for us. This is amazing grace. He also died the death we should die, for us. This is grace upon grace. He died in our place, taking the death and wrath our sins deserve. He did this so we would be forgiven if we believe this. Believing this will cause us to turn from our sins and bring salvation to all men. Old and young, male and female, slave and free are saved if they put the full weight of their hope of salvation on God’s grace shown in Jesus’s life and death.

This grace that appeared and saves those who believe in Jesus, also trains them to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age. These are the moral implications for those who believe in Christ. This salvation is not the result of living this way, living this way is the result of having this salvation, by grace. People are saved by grace, not works. This good news instructs and inspires us to do good works. Grace teaches us to live a self-controlled life in the present age which is marked by self-indulgence. Grace trains us to live upright lives, rather than continuing our unjust practices toward others. Grace also instructs us to live godly lives in this age, where everyone else rejects or neglects God’s worship and will.

Christians not only believe the grace of God has appeared, but also that the glory of God will appear in Jesus. The gospel teaches the future appearance of God in Jesus Christ, which is good news for you if you believe because ‘when Christ, who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory’. Christians, therefore, are waiting for our blessed hope. The one who came for our salvation, will come again for our glorification, which is the completion of our salvation. Jesus gave himself for us, for our salvation, which means heaven hereafter, but also motivates holiness here and now. He redeemed us to purify us from all lawlessness and make us zealous for good works until he comes.

As a child you were probably told by someone at sometime to look both ways before crossing the street. Believers need to constantly look both ways to see the already and not yet of the gospel. We need to look backward to what God has done for us in Christ. It can be captured in the word ‘grace’. We need to look forward to what God will do for us in Christ. It can be summed up by the word ‘glory’.

When this becomes real to a person, he or she will be grateful and become godly. Titus, like all spiritual leaders, was to declare the good news and the good works that accord with the good news. He was to exhort and rebuke, as needed, as he did. Spiritual leaders, like Titus, are to make it hard for professing believers to live ungrateful and ungodly lives, because of what they teach and how they live.