“Transforming Grace”

Titus 2:11-15

based on the sermon preached on 28-4-24,
available at https://lwac.org.au/sermons or on the podcast

CONTEXT AND KEY IDEAS

1. Paul teaches both justification and sanctification in these verses, two key theological concepts.
2. Paul also references the return of Jesus Christ as conquering King, something he thought was going to happen soon.
3. Once again Paul asserts that what Jesus did for us was by grace and not works, but this grace is applied to us to save us, purify us and prepare us to do good.

CONNECT

- Sanctification is very much the process of transformation, and transformation means change. So, sanctification means personal change to become more like Jesus. Or as John the Baptist declared, “he (Jesus) must increase, I must decrease.” Listen to the Zach Williams song “Less like me” which addresses this. Can you relate to what Zach says is in the song? Discuss as you are able.

STUDY

Read Titus 2:11

- The bringing of salvation refers to our conversion or our justification before God, the point at which we are declared righteous by God. We are not made righteous by our own efforts or even by God at our conversion, we are *declared* righteous. This could be instantaneous at a memorable point in time, or it could be the result of a process over time.

- What was your conversion like? Was it a moment in time or over a long period of time? Were other people involved in your coming to understand your sinful state and need for God’s mercy and grace in Jesus? What events were significant in this? Share about this as you are able.

- Do you ever have doubts about your salvation? What might cause you (or anyone) to question whether they are really born again?

Read Titus 2:12

- Paul emphasizes two ways in which grace then applies to our lives, once we have been justified or converted. This is called sanctification and is the process by which we become more like Jesus as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit who lives in us. First, this sanctifying grace teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and second, this sanctifying grace teaches us to live lives which are self-controlled, upright and godly. This follows the classic "No-Yes" pattern which is frequently used by Paul.

- Make a list of some of those things to which we ought to say "no" as we are growing in godliness and sanctification. Then make a list of those things to which we ought to say "yes."

- Are these lists easy to construct? Are some behaviours to avoid and other behaviours to embrace obvious? Are there also some grey areas, where well-meaning Christians might disagree?

- In his message, Rev'd. Shane referred to sanctification as "the process by which we are gradually weaned off of life-robbing sin and selfishness and restored to living out of the life-giving love of God." As you are able, share one life-robbing self-centered behaviour you have left behind as you are conformed more and more to the image of Christ. Similarly, share one life-giving God-centered behaviour you have embraced as you become more like Christ.

Read Titus 2:13

- Paul declares that the Christians in his day were waiting for something called "the blessed hope." He refers to it as the glorious appearing, or return, of Jesus as King to set everything in the world to right and to restore the world to God's original intention, as in the Garden of Eden. This "blessed hope" is often referred to as "imminent," meaning it could happen at any time.

- What would the signs have been in Paul's day that the return of Jesus was imminent and could be at any time, any day now?

- What are the signs around us today that Jesus' return is still imminent, that it could happen at any time now?

- Are there any signs around us that Jesus' return might not be for a while yet?

- When you think of the return of Jesus, if it were to happen in your lifetime, while you are still alive, does the thought make you joyful or does it frighten you? If it frightens you, what about it raises fear in you.

Read Titus 2:14-15

- Paul again states that there is a connection between the fact of our salvation and the purpose of our salvation. He points out that as we have been justified and sanctified, as we have been redeemed and purified, we ought to be eager to do what is good.

- Does this eagerness to do good spring naturally now from our being redeemed and purified? Does it just well-up and spring-forth, almost uncontrollably? We can't wait to do good! If so, is it always this way? Or does doing good sometimes require discipline and intentionality?

APPLY

- Not to toot your own horn, but make a list of some of the good things you do which you do eagerly and easily. Then make another list of the good things you do which require discipline and intentionality. Make any observations about the two lists which seem appropriate.

- Now, make the connection. How does both your eagerness to do good and your discipline at doing good stem from and connect to your justification and sanctification? Explain this connection as best you can.

- Which other aspect of this study has struck you the most and why? What are you going to do as a result ?

- Identify one or more truths from this study which speak to and can be applied in your life.

  1.
  2.

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH AND FOR ONE ANOTHER

- According to need.