

Honoring Heroes

July 9, 2017 ~ Titus 2.11-14

Part 5 of 7-Part Series

❖ Parts 1 thru 4:

1. Following Orders ~ 2 things – “set in order” and “appoint elders”
2. Choosing Lieutenants ~ Elder role and qualifications
3. Establishing Discipline ~ Titus was to “stop the mouths” of false teachers
4. Training Troops ~ Paul gave specific direction to 5 social groups

❖ Today’s message is about “Honoring Heroes”

v11a ~ “For the grace of God that brings salvation”

❖ “For” directs us to what was just said / Paul had given instructions to:

- ✧ older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and bondservants
- ✧ Everyone was instructed how to live / Now they’re reminded of why

❖ “[T]he grace of God .. brings salvation”

- ✧ “God’s grace is His active favor bestowing the greatest gift upon those who deserve the greatest punishment.” - Hendriksen & Kistemaker commentary
- ✧ Grace is personified ~ Grace “brings salvation” and “teaches us”

v11b ~ “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men”

❖ The phrase “all men” doesn’t refer to every individual on earth

- ✧ It takes “all men” in the inclusive sense – that none are exempt
 - ✧ It refers to people of all kinds - men/women - rich/poor - Jew/Gentile
- ✧ For millennia most people were excluded from God’s special blessing
- ✧ But now, God’s grace expanded to cover the entire world (*as prophesied*)
 - ✧ Story of **Acts 10** – Cornelius & Gentiles (**v15, v22, v28, v34-35, v44-45**)

❖ The word for “appeared” is based on the same root as the word “epiphany”

- ✧ An “epiphany” is a “manifestation of a divine or supernatural being”
 - ✧ It’s also to “suddenly grasp the full meaning of something”
- ✧ **Read Is 9.2** ~ “The people who walked .. a light has shined”
- ✧ **Read Is 49.5-6** ~ “And now the Lord says .. ends of the earth”
 - ✧ “appeared to all men” and “ends of the earth” have similar meaning
- ✧ **Read Lk 2.25-33** ~ “And behold, there was .. were spoken of Him”

Xition: This personified “grace of God” teaches us . . .

v12a ~ “teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts”

- ❖ The “grace of God” not only saves us from hell / It teaches us how to live
 - ✧ This “teaching” is a “training” / “step by step” leading and guiding
- ❖ In typical Pauline fashion we have “put OFF / ON” structure
- ❖ He starts with “put OFF” / “denying”
 - ✧ This action of “denying” emerges from a will redirected to please God
 - ✧ The new believer is pleased to renounce anything that displeases God
- ❖ “What is to be denied?”
 - ✧ “ungodliness” ~ Throwing off all obligation and duty towards God
 - ✧ “worldly lusts” ~ immoral desires, pleasures, materialism, vanity, passion

v12b ~ “we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age”

- ❖ Now we come to the positive action / What is to be “put on”?
- ❖ “What is to be affirmed?” That they “should live”:
 1. “soberly” ~ Paul’s 4th reference to this word
 - ◇ Elders and young men to be “sober-minded” / Older men “sober”
 - ◇ All are to “live soberly” / Seriously ~ Purposefully ~ Thoughtfully
 - ◇ This pertains to the individual / Their character
 2. “righteously” ~ This refers to the person’s actions towards others
 - ◇ They’re to behave well / treat people fairly / love them in action
 3. “godly” ~ This refers to their attitude and actions towards God
 - ◇ They’re to act reverently / obediently / living each day with/for God

v12c ~ “in the present age”

- ❖ Some taught that how you lived on this earth didn’t really matter
 - ✧ All that mattered was that you knew that a better world awaited you
 - ✧ People who regarded flesh as having little dignity often indulged in it
 - ✧ **!!!**: Muslim jihadists / 911 hijackers went to clubs (*disdain but indulge*)
- ❖ But how we live is very important to God
 - ✧ Our assurance of salvation is far from a license to sin
 - ✧ Instead it’s a constant reminder to be thankful

Xition: Now Paul turns to the future . . .

v13a ~ “looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing”

- ❖ Verse 12 ended with an emphasis upon godly living “in the present age”
- ❖ Verse 13 opens looking to the “blessed hope and glorious appearing”
 1. “blessed hope” ~ This is “the” hope common to all believers
 - ✧ Shedding all sin / Being clothed in robe of righteousness
 - ✧ Gal 5.5 ~ “For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith”
 - ✧ Col 1.3-5 ~ “We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel”
 - ✧ Read 2 Cor 3.18 ~ “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord”
 2. “glorious appearing” ~ Literal translation ~ “**and the appearing of the glory**”
 - ✧ Read 1 John 3.2-3 ~ “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”
 - ✧ Read Col 3.4 ~ “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”
 - ✧ Read Phil 3.20-21 ~ “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”
- ❖ Recap / Absent from the body / Present with the Lord
 - ✧ Read 2 Cor 5.1-8 ~ “For we know that .. present with the Lord.”
 - ✧ “blessed hope” ~ Us being cleansed of all sin and robed in righteousness
 - ✧ “glorious appearing” ~ Jesus appearing to us when we die
 - ✧ We each await our own personal epiphany when we leave this earth

Xition: Let’s address the final phrase of verse 13 . . .

v13c ~ “of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”

- ❖ Somewhat controversial / 2 titles ~ “great God” / “Savior Jesus Christ”
 - ✧ Alternative rendering ~ “of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ”
- ❖ Some say 2 persons are here – Father and Son / Others say only Son
 - ✧ Those holding to 2 persons don’t like “great” applied to Christ
 - ✧ Yet Jesus is referred to as “great” by angel Gabriel in **Luke 1.32**
 - ✧ **Hebrews 4.14** also refers to Jesus as the “great High Priest”

Skipping for Now -> v14a ~ “who gave Himself for us”

v14b ~ “that He might redeem us from every lawless deed”

- ❖ Jesus’ sacrifice is sufficient to fully “redeem” us from “every” sin
- ❖ Roman Catholic teachings c/sin offend the honor of Christ and must be opposed
- ❖ All forms of “works righteousness” or “self righteousness” are offensive

v14c ~ “purify for Himself His own special people”

- ❖ KJV translated this as “peculiar people”
- ❖ **!!!**: Popular sarcastic phrase / Dana Carvey ~ “Well, aren’t you special!”
- ❖ It’s no surprise that biblical phrases wind up as insults in culture

v14d ~ “zealous for good works”

- ❖ Good works are extremely important to God
 - ✧ Paul stresses “good works” to Titus four times in this letter
 - ✧ Cornelius – Centurion God chose to reveal plan for Gentiles (**Acts 10.4**)
 - ✧ “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.”

Returning to Start of Verse 14 / Rescue Stories

- ❖ Every country recognizes acts of heroism and sacrifice
 - ✧ **!!!**: Hero web ~ Moses is 35th after Rosa Parks and before Charles Dickens
 - ✧ Hero lists don’t allow inclusion of Jesus
 - ✧ **!!!**: UP class – Name a hero (*Guy before me said MLK Jr - I said Jesus*)
- ❖ We love rescue stories
 - ✧ **!!!**: Dunkirk – movie in theaters (*338k men rescued from German forces*)

Xition: vss 13-14 ~ “Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ .. gave Himself for us”

Jesus Our Hero

- ❖ vss 13-14 ~ “Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ .. gave Himself for us”
- ❖ Christ’s sacrifice is the greatest act of selflessness ever performed on earth
 - ✧ Scale is immense – affecting billions of people
 - ✧ Scope is unique – extending beyond this world to the next
- ❖ Jesus has had greater impact upon earth than any other human
 - ✧ Poem (last paragraph) – “**A Solitary Life**”
 - ◆ “All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.”

- ❑ Jesus “gave Himself for us” / He rescued us from a certain destruction
 - What God expects in return is obedience, thankfulness and service
- ❑ Jesus made us his “special” or “peculiar” people
 - We each await our own personal epiphany of Jesus
 - “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord”
- ❑ And we’ll finally be clothed completely in righteousness

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen *pause* Go in peace . . .

“One Solitary Life”

"Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness.

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth – His coat.

When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life."

“The Incomparable Christ”

“More than nineteen hundred years ago there was a Man born contrary to the laws of life. This Man lived in poverty and was reared in obscurity. He did not travel extensively. Only once did He cross the boundary of the country in which He lived; that was during His exile in childhood.”

“He possessed neither wealth nor influence. His relatives were inconspicuous, and had neither training nor formal education. In infancy He startled a king; in childhood He puzzled doctors; in manhood He ruled the course of nature, walked upon the billows as if pavements, and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His service.”

“He never wrote a book, and yet all the libraries of the country could not hold the books that have been written about Him. He never wrote a song, and yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all the song writers combined.”

“He never founded a college, but all the schools put together cannot boast of having as many students. “He never marshaled an army, nor drafted a soldier, nor fired a gun; and yet no leader ever had more volunteers who have, under His orders, made more rebels stack arms and surrender without a shot fired.”

“He never practiced psychiatry, and yet He healed more broken hearts than all the doctors far and near. Once each week the wheels of commerce cease their turning and multitudes wend their way to worshipping assemblies to pay homage and respect to Him.”

“The names of the past proud statesmen of Greece and Rome have come and gone. The names of the past scientists, philosophers, and theologians have come and gone; but the name of this Man abounds more and more. Though time has spread nineteen hundred years between the people of this generation and the scene of His crucifixion, yet He still lives. Herod could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold Him.

“He stands forth upon the highest pinnacle of heavenly glory, proclaimed of God, acknowledged by angels, adored by saints, and feared by devils, as the living, personal Christ, our Lord and Savior.”