

# *THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## TITUS

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Kevin Pendergrass.

Welcome to the Gospel of Christ. In this lesson we are going to be looking at the book of Titus. In this book Paul begins by discussing the qualifications of elders. He then talks about the jobs and responsibilities of an elder. That is important, but we have already looked at those things in 1 Timothy 3. So, as we examine Titus, I would like us to concentrate on the topic of grace. What does the Bible have to say about grace? I believe that grace is a subject that is misunderstood by the world at large. Not many people know what grace is all about. There are many preachers today who are preaching things that are contrary to the Word of God, and grace is one of those subjects. Instead of people going to their Bibles in order to see what the Bible has to say about grace, they simply listen to their preacher. I know people who hardly even believe in God, yet who believe that if there is a God, they believe they are OK because grace is found in the Bible. That shows us the ignorance that many people have on this subject. People simply do not seem to understand much about biblical grace. So, let's see what Titus 2:11-15 has to say about grace, and then we will continue on from there as we examine this subject. In Titus 2:11-15 we find the following:

“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.”

Paul tells Titus to teach people about biblical grace, and to tell them that grace has appeared to all mankind. To some extent, it has; we will be looking at that a little later on in more detail. But here Paul is going to explain what biblical grace is all about. What is grace? It is important for us to define grace. Grace means “unmerited favor.” To put it in simple terms, it means that we get something that we do not deserve. The flip side of that would be mercy. Mercy is not getting something that we do deserve, where grace is getting something that we do not deserve. A case in point would be John 3:16—“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Jesus Christ died for our sins. The Bible says that “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Christ died so that we could have our sins taken away. That was God’s grace. There was nothing that you and I did to come up with the plan of salvation. No one living on Earth came up with the plan of salvation. In Ephesians 3 we are told that this plan of salvation was in God’s mind before time even began. It is important for us to understand that grace is something that we do not deserve. We do not deserve grace. Nor can we earn grace. Yet without the grace of God, we cannot be saved.

So how are we saved? When it comes to salvation and grace, people misunderstand how all of this works. Some people teach that we are saved by “grace only.” Whenever we tack the word “only” to any sentence or word, it is dangerous because it eliminates everything else. For example, when someone says that we are saved by “faith only,” if they really meant that, it would mean that we are not saved by grace, repentance, confession,

or baptism because “only” means “only.” It means nothing else. When someone says that we are saved by something “only,” caution needs to be used because there is not just one single thing by which we are saved. Yes, we are saved by grace; there is no doubt about that. But we also are saved by belief, repentance, confession, baptism, the love of God, and so on. We are not saved “by grace only.” Think about it this way. If we were saved by grace only, that means that everyone would be saved since it was by God’s grace that He sent His Son to die on the cross. If we are saved by grace only, that would mean that everyone at large would be saved. Yet Matthew 7:13-14 teaches that only a few will enter the kingdom of Heaven.

So, what part does grace play in salvation? Paul explains that in Ephesians 2:8-10.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

How are we saved? We are saved “by grace through faith.” In the original language it says that we are saved by grace through **the** faith. Why is that important? Ephesians 4:5 says that there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. Today people may ask you, “What is your faith?” There is only one faith, according to the Bible. If we are faithful, we must have that one faith, which means the system of faith described in the New Testament. In Acts 6:7 it speaks of how people were obedient to “the faith,” which means that they obeyed the Word of God (the system of faith). We are saved by grace through obedience to “the faith” (Eph. 2:8-10). That explains the part that grace plays in salvation. Grace is God’s part. We are saved by grace. Whose part is that? It is God’s part. “By faith”—whose part is that? That is our part.

Now I want to talk about works. People say, “Well, that’s all good and well, but the Bible says that we are not saved by works. So, there can be nothing that we can do to gain our salvation.” It is true that there is nothing we can do to earn our salvation. But let’s examine works as used in the Bible. Works go hand in hand with grace and obedience. And this is where a lot of people are confused. How does works come into play? There are three different types of works found in the Bible (specifically the New Testament). The first type of work is “works of the Old Law” (i.e., the Law of Moses). There is absolutely no way that anyone could be justified by works of the Old Law. In the Book of Galatians, that is what Paul was talking about. He had spent time with the people in Galatia, who had been baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. They had become members of the one church. They had various congregations of the Lord’s people in Galatia. But there was a problem. There were people coming in to teach them that they had been saved by the Law of Moses, not by faith in Christ. These people were trying to convince people to go back under the Law of Moses. Some people, in fact, had actually done that. In Galatians 5:4 Paul said, “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” So, one type of works is “works of the Old Law.” We cannot be justified (saved) by works of the Old Law.

A second type of works is mentioned in Ephesians 2:8-10—works of merit. We are not saved by works of merit, which represent something that we can do by ourselves. In other words, it is as if we were to do something and then say, “You owe me something for what I’ve done.” That would be a work of merit. It is something that we do totally by ourselves, and when we have done it, someone owes us something. But the Bible says that we are not saved by works of merit. We cannot boast about that, and say, “I’m a Christian because of what I’ve done.” That is a work of merit, and the Bible says that we are not saved by that.

However, there is a third type of works found in the Bible. And it is that on which I want to concentrate today. That is “works of obedience.” This is something that we must have if we are going to be faithful Christians. Galatians 5:6 (“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love”) sums this up because it shows how faith works through love. This type of faith is an obedient faith because it is a working faith. What is the motivation behind it? It is love. This describes perfectly “works of obedience,” which is faith working through love. No one can claim to have faith if he is unwilling to do what the Bible says.

In Hebrews 5:9 the writer makes this as clear as he possibly can. “And having been perfected, He [Jesus] became the author of eternal salvation **to all who obey Him.**” For whom is Jesus the Author of eternal salvation? “All those who obey Him.” If we have not obeyed Christ, is He the Author of our eternal salvation? Absolutely not! We must exhibit “works of obedience.” We are going to be discussing quite a bit about this because it is important for us to understand “works of obedience.” In Joshua 6:2 we see an example of “works of obedience.” “And the Lord said to Joshua: ‘See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.’” At this point, did Joshua and the army of Israel actually have possession of Jericho? They had it “in promise.” But that promise had conditions that had to be met on their part. The Lord commanded them to march around the city for six days and then blow their trumpets. Then, on the seventh day they were to march around the city seven times before they blew their trumpets. Let’s say that up until the seventh day, they had done everything that God had commanded them. But on the seventh day they said to themselves, “We’ve followed God by doing exactly what He commanded us to do. We’ve marched around five times, and we are getting really tired. So, let’s march around Jericho’s walls just one more time, and then maybe God’s grace will cover us because we’ve done just about everything that He asked us to do.” If they had marched around only six times on that last day, would Jericho’s walls have fallen?” No. Why? Because they would not have been obedient to the commands that the Lord had given them. You may say, “Wait a minute. The Lord had already said that they had the city.” But they had it “in promise.” They had to obey from the heart. Or, suppose that the people were feeling great on that day. They said, “We’re doing exactly what God has commanded us to do. This is the seventh time to walk around the city. But instead of us stopping after the seventh time and blowing the trumpets, let’s walk around the city eight times. Let’s give God more than what He requested.” Would Jericho’s walls have fallen? Absolutely not! Why? Because the people would have been disobedient to the commands that God had given them. We know from Joshua 6:21 that the people followed exactly the commands that the Lord had given them. And because of that, the promise made to them in Joshua 6:2 was fulfilled. At that point, could the people boast and say, “Look at what **we** have done”? You know as well as I do that they did not boast—because it was not **them** who took down Jericho’s walls. They were not the ones who took the city. It was God’s power, combined with their obedience. Every time we see a promise from God, the conditions it contains must be met on our part. Another example of this is found in 2 Kings 5:1-19, which tells us the story of Naaman’s leprosy. He had leprosy, and was told to go dip in the River Jordan seven times. The River Jordan was not a beautiful river with clear water; it was muddy. Naaman did not like what he was told to do, but eventually he ended up doing it anyway. But what if Naaman had dipped in the river Jordan five or six times instead of seven? Or eight or nine times? Would he have been cleansed of his leprosy? No. Or what if he had dipped seven times—but in a different river? Would his leprosy have been cleansed? No. But because he dipped seven times in the River Jordan, we know that his leprosy was cleansed. Afterwards, could he look at people and say, “Look at what **I** did for myself”? No. It was God’s power combined with his obedience that cleansed his leprosy.

Today, that is how we receive salvation. How do we accept God's grace? We accept God's grace by being obedient to Him. In Mark 16:15-16 Jesus clearly taught that the person who "believes and is baptized" will be saved, while he who does not believe will be condemned. In Romans 6:3-4 we learn that we are buried with Christ in water for the forgiveness of our sins, and then we are raised to walk "in newness of life." In Acts 2:38 we are told that we must repent and be baptized "for the forgiveness of our sins." In 1 Peter 3:21 we are told that baptism "does also now save us." People have a problem understanding why the Bible teaches that a person must be baptized to be saved. It is not because the Bible is unclear on the matter. The Bible is very clear. The reason people are confused is not because of the Lord. We know from 1 Corinthians 14:33 that God is "not the author of confusion." The reason people are confused on baptism is because they do not understand the concept of "an obedient faith." They do not understand the part that works play in salvation, and how we have to do our part. But it is not works of merit. And that's where the confusion comes in.

Think about this. When we are baptized for the forgiveness of our sins, is that something about which we can boast? Do we go around telling people, "I've taken away my own sins"? Of course not—any more than Naaman could say, "I've cleansed my own leprosy." But can we say that we were submissive to the command that the Lord gave us? Can we say that we were obedient, and the grace of God then saved us? Absolutely! When we come in contact with the blood of Jesus, we are accepting God's grace. Almost everyone believes (because the Bible so clearly teaches) that it is Christ's blood that saves us. We know from Hebrews 9 that the blood of bulls and goats cannot save us. It is the blood of Jesus Christ—the ultimate sacrifice that had to be made—that saves us. How do we come in contact with that blood? We come in contact with that blood (Rev. 1:5) at the point of baptism. That is true obedience to the grace of God.

Think of this worldly example. Suppose there was a little boy who has been saving up his money. He has been wanting a bicycle. He has been doing everything he can to save up his money. One day the little boy and his father go to the mall, and the little boy sees a brand-new bicycle. He says, "Daddy, can I please have that bicycle?" The father says, "Son, how much money do you have?" The little boy digs into his pocket and says, "I have \$62. How much is the bicycle?" The father looks at the bicycle and says, "It is \$200." Would any of us say that the little boy could get the bicycle for \$62? Is there any way that the boy, in and of himself, could ever receive that bicycle? Of course not, because he's short a lot of money. But the father went ahead and bought the bicycle for him anyway. The little boy had to do his part, but his part alone could not have gotten him the bicycle. It was because of the grace of his father that he received the bicycle.

Is there anything that we, in and of ourselves, can do to receive Heaven as our eternal home? No. It is because of the grace of God, combined with our obedience, that we can be saved for eternity. Look at Matthew 7:21. How does one receive God's grace fully? It is when a person fully does the will of the Father. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." It is true, to some extent, that all have received God's grace—which means that we all can have the opportunity to be children of God. But we must do God's will if we want to go to Heaven. Noah was a man who found grace in the eyes of God (Gen. 6:8). But why did he find grace in God's eyes? It was because of his obedience. Moses also was a man who found grace in the eyes of God (Ex. 33:12). Why was that? It was because of his obedience. Now I want us to read from Romans 6:15-18 so we can see that we are either slaves of God or slaves of men. The only way we can receive God's grace is through our obedience.

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

If you are a sinner, then you are still a slave to the world. You are a slave, no matter to whom you choose to be a slave. You are slave to either the world or to God. But notice that verse 16 speaks of “sin leading to death, or obedience leading to righteousness.” What leads us to righteousness? We know it is grace, but it is through obedience. Verse 17 then says, “But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” The reason I want to concentrate so much today on obedience has to do with the fact that people do not understand how many times the Bible concentrates on obedience. The Bible ties obedience, works, and grace all together, along with faith. We must understand how they go hand in hand. Unfortunately, many people have misused God’s grace. They claim that a person can sin and live any type of life he wants to, yet still have God’s grace. But that was one of the problems that plagued the church in Rome. And that is what Paul dealt with. People were saying, “Can’t we sin, but still have grace cover us?” Paul’s answer in Romans 6:1-2 was this: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” We cannot continue in sin, hoping all the time that grace will abound. One of the problems of the Christians in Galatia was that they had a false view of grace, just as many do today. They thought that grace was the same thing that many people today think grace is. Look at Galatians 2:17.

“But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

We know that Paul was saying that if righteousness came through the Old Law, then Christ would have died in vain. If we could have been saved by the Old Law by having a Day of Atonement every year to offer sacrifices, then Jesus died in vain. There would have been no point in Him coming to Earth. Paul was saying that he was not setting aside grace because grace is very important. But some people were abusing and misusing God’s grace. They had the mindset that the more they sinned, the more God’s grace covered them. Is that not the same mindset that exists today a lot of times when we think, “The more I sin, the more I’m helping God because that means that He can give me more grace”? Paul asks, “How can you say that you have been called out and are now a faithful Christian, yet you are living in sin while thinking that you are fine, and covered by God’s grace?” That means that Christ would have become a minister of sin. You would have been converted so that you could continue sinning. That is the most ridiculous thing! Paul was pointing out to these people how inconsistent their thinking was. We can lose God’s grace, just as so many of those people had. In 2 John 9 we are told that if we do not abide in Christ’s doctrine, then we can be lost. But if, after becoming Christians, we walk in the light as Christ is in the light, then God’s grace covers us (1 Jn. 1:7-9). We must be willing to repent when we sin, confess to God that we have sinned, and not continue in that sin. If we do sin (and we will), we still can have God’s grace if we are willing to repent.

Now I want to talk about some things that grace cannot do. There are some things that people hope that grace will do, but as we will see, grace cannot do these things. Grace cannot save accountable people who have not obeyed the Gospel. In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 we see that there are two groups of people who are going to be lost for eternity. The first group is composed of those who do not know God. The second group is composed of those who do not obey the Gospel of Christ. If a person is accountable, but has not obeyed the Gospel, that person is lost. God's grace cannot save that person. If we are not in God's kingdom, His grace cannot save us. We know that Jesus Christ built only one church (or one kingdom). We know from Acts 20:28 and Matthew 16:18 that the church and the kingdom are one and the same. That church is His church—the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16). We must be in the Lord's church in order to be saved. If we are not members of the church of Christ (His church), then grace cannot save us. We know from 1 Corinthians 15:24 that the Lord will return to retrieve His kingdom (or church). If we are not a part of the one true church that Jesus established because we have not yet obeyed the Gospel, there is no way that grace can save us. One of the most shameful things that I have seen is when preachers stand up at funerals and un-do everything that they have done during their lives in the pulpit. They will preach what the Bible has to say, yet their emotions get the best of them and they say, "Maybe God's grace will cover this person." God's grace cannot cover a person who is not a Christian. It is impossible, according to the Scriptures, for that to happen.

Nor can God's grace overlook ignorance. Acts 17:30 tells us that God once overlooked ignorance, but now commands everyone to repent. God's grace cannot overlook ignorance. People have a mindset on occasion that "ignorance is bliss," and the more they don't study the Bible, the less they'll be held accountable. But that is not what the Bible teaches. It teaches that we are to study so that we will not be ignorant. If we are ignorant, and if we are not doing what God has commanded us to do, then God's grace cannot overlook such ignorance.

But one thing that God's grace did do is this: it sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross for us. The reason that God did this is because He loves us. In 2 Peter 3:9 we are told that the Lord wants everyone to be saved. He wants me to be saved, and He wants you to be saved. But the only way we can be saved is by doing His will. Have you heard what the Bible has to say (Rom. 10:17)? Have you believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Have you accepted the Bible as the only authority in matters of religion? If so, are you willing to repent of your sins? Are you willing to confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord? Do not say some sort of "sinner's prayer." The Bible does not teach us to do that. Do not get involved in confessing your sins to some man. Rather, confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Rom. 10:10). And, based upon that confession, accept God's grace by being baptized for the forgiveness of your sins so that you can receive Christ's precious blood. If you have not done these things, you are lost. But the good news is that you can do something about it right now. If you have not obeyed these truths, we pray today that you will obey the Gospel of Christ.

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR TITUS

1. What is the main topic covered in Titus 1?
2. According to the material contained in this lesson, in what other book and chapter of the New Testament is the same topic (mentioned in Titus 1) also discussed?
3. According to Titus 2:11, what has “brought salvation to all men”?
4. According to Titus 2:12, how should Christians strive to live each day of their lives?
5. According to Titus 2:13, to what should Christians earnestly look forward?
6. According to Titus 2:14, what did Jesus Christ do for us?
7. In Titus 3:15, what three things did Paul command Titus to do?
8. According to the content of this lesson, what is a good definition of “grace”?
9. According to the content of this lesson, how many different types of “works” are discussed in the New Testament?
10. What are the types of works mentioned in question #9 above?
11. According to Ephesians 2:8, how are we saved?
12. According to Hebrews 5:9, whom does Jesus save?
13. In Joshua 6, why were the Israelites successful in defeating the city of Jericho?
14. In 2 Kings 5:1-19, why was Naaman ultimately healed of his leprosy?
15. According to Mark 16:15-16, who will be saved from sin?
16. According to Acts 2:38 and 1 Peter 3:21, what must a person do in order to receive forgiveness of sins?
17. According to Romans 6:1-2, what must a person **not** do in order to allow grace to abound in his or her life?
18. According to Revelation 1:5, what cleanses us of our sins?
19. According to Romans 6:3-4, at what point do we come in contact with Christ’s blood?
20. What point was Jesus stressing in Matthew 7:21?
21. What important question did Paul ask in Romans 6:15?
22. According to Romans 6:18, what are we when we are set free from sin?