

“The Normal Christian Life – The Normal Christian Life -- How Then Should We Live, Part 8”

Review: In Christ Jesus, We Are All Created Unto Good Works, Part 2

- **Good Works in the Lives of Elders (Overseers)**
- **Good Works in the Lives of Believing Women**
- **Good Works in the Lives of Believing Men (Wealthy)**
- **Good Works in the Lives of Paul’s Co-Ministers, Timothy & Titus, and Us**
 - As we saw in our last study here in the Normal Christian Life series, Paul emphasizes in a very special way in his so-called “pastoral” letters to Timothy and Titus, his teachings regarding this new life in Christ. So much of those very personal letters is therefore applicable to each of us, starting with his exhortations regarding the true value of his letters themselves and indeed, all of the word of God, for they are “God-breathed”:

2 Timothy 3:14-17

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

- He exhorts him based on this background: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them* ...”: It makes a difference of whom one has been taught the scriptures, for some teachers are not teachers of the word of truth and others are, but are unfaithful to that word as given by God and intended to be understood and applied.
- “But continue [*Greek μένω, “to settle down and feel at home with”*] ... “
- There are several added and implied responsibilities here beyond that first one:
 - The scriptures [alone] are literally, “God-breathed”. It is for that reason that they have the inherent ability “to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”. A more literal

translation would be this: “Every mark [on the page] is God-breathed and therefore is profitable ...”

- As a consequence of being God-breathed, the scriptures alone are profitable in every way:
 - “For doctrine”: “doctrinal teaching”
 - “For reproof”: “providing evidence of departure”
 - “For correction”: “straightening the path”
 - “For instruction in righteousness”: “child rearing discipline”
- And it is all enabled for this grandest of the purposes of Almighty God, “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” So it is all about what God has done and is doing now through his word of power and the fullness of his grace.
- Paul’s letter to Titus is also very personal but much of it is generic for all believers. For example, in chapters 2 and 3, we read this (but for our purpose today, especially verses 7 and 8):

Titus 2:1-8

1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

3 The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

- These instructions for Titus are weighty indeed and should also be for us:
 - To speak the things (the truths) which are consistent with and promote sound or healthy doctrine, that is, that teaching consistent with the revelation of the mystery, the dispensation revealed to Paul for the Body of Christ, the assembly of which we are all members through faith in Him.

- He singles out now those groups within the Body one by one, the mature, older men, then the mature, older women, then the younger women, then the younger men, and finally those in bond service. He gives special instructions for each before refocusing on Titus himself:
- “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”
 - And then in the rest of the verses, we find these:

Titus 2:9-14

9 *Exhort* servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all *things*; not answering again;

10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

- So it is clear: It is not law with its works that teaches us and exhorts us today, but the grace of God and its teaching. And it is our heavenly hope that lifts us up and encourages us. For Christ gave himself for us ...

“... that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

- But he is not finished in this letter to Titus. Chapter 2 is so full of grace, truth, and it is a proper introduction to chapter 3, which we will look at again here in this study:
 - So, as in Ephesians, in the letter to Titus, immediately after bold statements regarding our salvation by grace through faith, he adds the “good works”. So it is something in his mind that he needed to add. It is like the glorious story has already been told, and the storytelling is done. But one thing still needs to be added at the end.

And it should be added in our walk of faith as well, but only after

what is realized in our hearts and minds, as written just before in those words.

For good works otherwise are not truly and authentically good at all. They become “Wood, hay, and stubble”, so very easily when they are not built up on the proper foundation. For they then become a part of a religious system that we have entered into or have created for ourselves.

- And then in conclusion: “These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”

Our Outline Today: The Normal Christian Life – How Then Should We Live, Part 8

- ***The Details of Our Living Under Grace Are Clear***
- ***The Saved and the Lost Are So Different, Whether In Life Or Judgment***
- ***The Glories of Grace Are Undeniable and So Encouraging***

I. The Details of Our Living Under Grace Are Clear:

[READ] Galatians 5:13-18

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16 *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

- Next time, Lord willing, we plan to review these most essential verses again, but for now looking ahead to Titus 3 is our intention, for when we are walking by the Spirit we have opportunity to shine as lights in the darkness. For then (and only then) our good works may be brought forth as the normal outgrowth of the fruit of the Spirit:

[READ] Titus 3:1-9, 14-15

1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

2 To speak evil of no man [*no one*], to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man [*mankind*] appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.*

These things are good and profitable unto men.

9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

- We have not missed, I hope, Paul’s “structured” teaching in all that we have been seeing here. For there is an important order in his teaching, as according to the Logic of Grace, he moves from doctrinal teaching to practical exhortation. These are not new commandments he is giving to us, therefore. They are “gracious exhortations”. I remember so well the day I first saw this in my studies, and it has made all the difference ever since. So first we see here the doctrinal teaching regarding our grace walk, and then following that, the focus can and does switch to works.
- Verses 4 through 9 show that progress so clearly here. It can also be seen in many other places in Paul’s letters, as we saw in our previous study here on the Normal Christian Life — How Then Should We Live?
- Let us also not miss something else written here, the contrasts with the unsaved and our new lives now displaying the wonders of God’s grace, and how he points us in our thinking forward to our eternal inheritance, for it is there that the fruitful living will show forth its true values eternally:

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”. He further explains his thinking by adding these words: “*This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*” These good works will provide, as we will now see in our study today, the basis for our inheritance eternally. For we shall be rewarded for them in our judgment:

II. The Saved and the Lost Are So Different, Whether In Life Or Judgment:

- While we are living, the contrasts between the saved and the lost could not be clearer, Paul writes in his Ephesians letter:

[READ] Ephesians 4:17-25

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

[READ] Ephesians 4:26-32

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

- So we see how great the contrast is and even more, should be, between the saved and the lost, in our living. But the focus shifts in his teaching elsewhere to the point when our short lives have reached their conclusion, and we must all come to our judgment. There, as we shall see, the judgments upon the saved and the lost vary so greatly according to the dispensational plans that apply to each:

- Firstly, the Judgment Seat of Christ, for believers of our current dispensation only:

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

- This is a summary statement only. I will comment more on this shortly. But in his first letter, he explains the nature of this judgment:

[READ] 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

- Take note well. Here, Paul reveals the basis for the judgment we will all face. And it may not be what we had expected. For it is not a quantity issue at all, but a quality one. And here is the rub: legalism and its brethren fail entirely. For their works are merely religious works or worse, no matter how abundant they may be, and will always fail to meet this godly standard.

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

- Ah, the blessedness revealed so boldly here is needed for our encouragement. Paul, in his second Corinthian letter, writes even more about this in chapter 5, in the verses leading up to verse 10, we read already:

[READ] 2 Corinthians 5:4-10

4 For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

- Some quick comments are needed regarding our coming judgment:

Verses 4 - 5: Our lives here are often burdened with troubles as he writes here. But they all provide, Paul writes here, opportunities for our rejoicing, for our confident expectation and hope. "... that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

- For it is God who is in our lives, working in us by means of the Holy Spirit. "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." This is clearly intended for us all now in this life.
- Verses 6 & 8: So we see that all is for our encouragement, by design. But for us to be properly encouraged, we need this knowledge: "knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight)."
- So, all here in this life points forward to this blessed end: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."

Some explanation is needed here ... "[*literally pleasing, to God, that is, or worthless, unpleasing to God*]."

- This is a beautiful and encouraging statement of our lives as the Lord God is ordaining them. In those earlier sections of 1 Corinthians, chapters 1 & 3, we saw the work of God from the “inside”, as it were, and here on the “outside”, with the final state in view. All points forward to this judgment and its detailed description here is so important.
 - The nature of this judgment: To complete the redemptive work of God in us.
 - Its timing: At the Rapture or before at our homeward calling.
 - Its purpose: To cleanse us of all that would distract and reveal our rewards.
- But, for unbelievers, of every dispensational order, their judgment is so different:

[READ] Revelation 20:11-15

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

- This is indeed a sobering statement concerning unbelievers of every dispensation. This judgment, the Great White Throne Judgment, is only for unbelievers:
 - The nature of this judgment: To complete the plan of God for this earth and its inhabitants (apart from the members of the Body of Christ who have already entered their inheritance at the Rapture, and apart from the believers of every other dispensation other than ours, who are resurrected, if they have died, and judged and given their Kingdom inheritance at its

beginning (see the earlier verses 4 through 6 and Christ's teaching in the gospels for that).

- Its timing: Between the end of the Millennial Kingdom and the beginning of the New Heavens and the New Earth.
- Its result: To judge the unsaved according to their works. This is to declare their degrees of suffering forever.
- Some necessary conclusions should be drawn:
 - All will be judged, but the judgments will be very different in many ways, whether for believers or for unbelievers.
 - For most certainly, there is a coming judgment for all the unsaved, The Great White Throne, while for believers, either the coming Kingdom with its earthly blessings, which scripture tells us so much about, or our heavenly inheritance.

We should be so encouraged, whatever our trials in this life.
Amen?

III. The Glories of Grace Are Undeniable and So Encouraging:

- For us today, all is of grace:
 - We are to abound in fruitfulness AND good works. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, our works will be tested, whether they are truly good or not. And those not will be removed and the others remain, for our own and Christ's eternal glory. Amen and amen.