

## What Difference Does It Make?

How the Gospel changes us.

Titus 2:11-15

April 11, 2021

**Opening ILL:** You know a tree by its fruit. If a tree produces apples, what kind of tree is it? If a tree produces oranges, what kind of tree is it? If a tree produces no fruit, no leaves what do you assume? Either it is not getting enough water and sunlight...or it is just dead.

What does Christianity produce? If we know that an apple tree is an apple tree because it produces apples, isn't it reasonable to ask, "What does the gospel produce? What difference does the gospel make in my life?" Specifically, what does the gospel call us to? How does it change our approach to life? What difference does it make?

### I. Introduction

#### A. Remember our theme— "Love and good deeds"

1. **Hebrews 10:24** and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds...

#### B. Remember what we have been focusing on.

1. Love as a more excellent way.

#### C. Remind them where we are going.

1. We will begin looking into the book of James in a few weeks.
2. Tonight, we will begin a study of the book of Judges (invite them).

**Transition/point:** This morning, we are going to focus on what the Gospel produces in us...what it leads us to. We need to know what impact the gospel should have on us. Otherwise, how would we know if we sufficiently understand the gospel or are sufficiently moved by our belief in it.

### II. The Gospel is available to all people. (v. 11)

#### A. What does this mean?

1. This is a reference to the Gospel.
  - a. Notice that grace is personified here. When Jesus appeared, grace appeared.
2. Notice the Greek word *epiphany*, from which we get the word, "Epiphany."
  - a. This word means appearance or manifestation.
3. This word occurs again in v. 13.

#### B. What is the result of this great appearing?

1. Salvation has been made available to all men.
  - a. Does this mean that every individual goes to Heaven? [Universalism] No
    - i. If there is even one person in Hell, this verse cannot mean universalism.
  - b. This means that the gospel is offered to everybody, regardless of nationality or other distinctions.
    - i. Notice that in the context of Titus 2, that Paul is talking about young men/old men; young women/older women.
    - ii. Some say it this way: "Christ died for all men without distinction, but not for all men without exception." I think that is helpful.

### III. The Gospel teaches us how to live. (vv. 12-13)

#### A. The gospel teaches us to deny

1. Godlessness [ἀσέβεια]
  - a. This word means, "in general ἀσέβεια is understood vertically as a lack of reverence for deity and hallowed institutions as displayed in sacrilegious words and deeds:"
  - b. This godlessness can be described simply as living and thinking as if there were no God.
    - i. **Psalm 14:1** For the choir director. A Psalm of David. The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.

- c. Could it be said that some of us believe in God and yet go most of our day thinking and acting in a virtually identical way as those who don't?
- d. On the other hand, a clear understanding of (and devotion to) the gospel leads us to live in the light of God's reality and His word.

2. Worldly desire [κοσμικὰς ἐπιθυμίας]

- a. The Greek word here (ἐπιθυμίας) for “desire” is not necessarily a bad word. We understand this, because we all recognize that some desires are good and some desires are bad.
- b. It is the modifier (κοσμικὰς) that shows us that these desires are bad.
  - i. Why are they bad? Because they are worldly. That is to say that they prioritize this fading, sin-stained world over the God of the universe.

**B. The gospel teaches us to live [pursue a life lived]:**

1. Soberly [σωφρόνως]

- a. What does this word mean?
  - i. One Lexicon [Friberg] defines this word to mean: “strictly having a sound or healthy mind; as having ability to curb desires and impulses so as to produce a measured and orderly life.”
  - ii. Basically stated, this word means “reasonable” or “rational” as opposed to “unreasonable” or “irrational.”
  - iii. The idea of this word is to be balanced mentally and in terms of how we think and live. A slightly different form of this word occurs in 2:6 and is translated in the NASB as “sensible.”

2. Righteously [δικαίως]

- a. This word means that our new lives are to be categorized by righteousness, justice.
- b. This would lead us to understand that the gospel leads us to obedience:
  - i. Doing what is good.
  - ii. Not doing what is evil.

3. Piously [εὐσεβῶς]

- a. This word is the opposite of the word “godlessness” above.
- b. This word goes a little bit further than the 2 preceding words.
- c. This word goes beyond self-restraint, and beyond simply doing the right things.
- d. This word delves into the territory of our motivations, focus and relationship to God.
  - i. In other words, this word leads us to understand that this reasonable and obedient life is lived for overtly religious reasons.

**C. The gospel teaches us to anticipate**

- 1. The “epiphany”—What is this?
- 2. Of our “great God and Savior”
  - a. Is this referring to two people (“Our Great God” and “Our Savior”) or one?
    - i. Granville Sharp rule (avoid the technicalities).
    - ii. One. Jesus is described here as our great God and our savior.

**IV. The Gospel implies a purpose (v. 14)**

**A. Jesus gave Himself for us**

- 1. In order to redeem us—That is to say, to free us from the consequences of our sin (Negative)
- 2. In order to cleanse us—That is to say, to prepare us (to make us) clean for service.

**B. To what end?**

**Quote:** The grand object of the manifestation of divine grace in Christ Jesus is to deliver men from the dominion of evil. ... The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the manifestation of the divine grace to men, came into the world to put an end to the unutterable tyranny of evil. His work and teaching are meant to uplift mankind at large, and also to redeem his people from all iniquity, and to sanctify them to himself as his peculiar heritage.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“The Two Appearings and the Discipline of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 32 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1886), 194.

1. That we would be devoted to Him. [λαὸν περιούσιον]
  - a. That we would be, in a very real and special way, His!
    - i. KJV—a “peculiar” people.
    - ii. NKJV—a “special” people.
    - iii. NASB/ESV—a people for His own possession.
    - iv. Greek word periousion—“pert. to being of very special status, chosen, especial” BDAG
2. That we would be diligent in good works. (ζηλωτὴν καλῶν ἔργων)
  - a. Christianity calls us not only to deny certain things, but to pursue (live by) certain things.
  - b. We were saved, not to slavishly and miserably do good things, but instead to be zealots of good works.
    - i. Are you? Am I? Is anybody?
    - ii. We understand by this passage that we should expect good works to flow from our hearts and into the life of every believer like apples grow on apple trees.

## V. The Gospel cannot be disregarded (v. 15)

### A. Open your mouth!

1. Speak these things
2. Exhort (encourage) by means of these things.
3. Reprove (rebuke) by means of these things.

### B. Refuse to be ignored!

1. We should do our best to make sure that we not simply being dismissed.
  - a. Why might people ignore us?
  - b. How might people ignore us?

## VI. Conclusions

### A. We were saved for sanctification.

1. Stagnation in our spiritual lives is, at best, confusing. At worst, it may make us wonder if we are really alive.

### B. We were not saved by our good works, but we were saved unto good works.

1. **Ephesians 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.