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What Grace Teaches Us!

by Stan Cox

The apostle Paul wrote to Titus, explaining that God's grace has something to teach us. Let us read the text, and then make some points:

"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" (Titus 2:11-14).

First, we need to understand how grace teaches. It is simple, the gift of grace is great. It is great in its benefits. God's gift of His Son as our Redeemer affords us a hope of eternal life! It is great in its sacrifice. God's giving of His Son was a great sacrifice in that Jesus was the only begotten of the Father, and God loved His Son. It is great in what it reveals to us about God. He loves us! He gave us everything we need to deal with our sin. He wants every living soul to go to heaven, and so has gifted us with grace, so that we can obtain what we ourselves could not possibly receive on our own merit. So, the gift of grace impresses the thoughtful because of its significance, sacrifice and its absolute necessity for our redemption.

As we contemplate this truth, it makes certain things evident. We need to respond to God's will for us, as a proper response of thanksgiving. This means to live *"soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age."* God created us to serve Him. He defines holiness, and expects us to try and attain it. *"But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'"* (1 Peter 1:15-16). We need to look for the second coming of Jesus. Here, looking does not indicate peering up into the sky, but being prepared for what is inevitable. *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up"* (2 Peter 3:10).

Finally, let us consider that this grace is universally given. This was a truth that was hard for some to grasp in the infancy of the kingdom, but it clearly *"has appeared to all men."* As Paul wrote, *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3:28). It does not matter your culture, race, position in society or gender. If you belong to Christ, you have the hope of heaven.

What Have They Seen In Your House?

Grant B. Caldwell

In 2 Kings 20, an embassy of men were sent from the King of Babylon to King Hezekiah of Judah. Hezekiah was hospitable to the men and in verse 14 and 15, the Prophet Isaiah asked him, *"What did these men say, and from where did they come to you? ... What have they seen in your house?"*

Hezekiah answered, *"They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them."* We sight this reference, not so much because of the incident itself, nor because of the concerns of Isaiah expressed in the context, but because of the question posed by the great prophet of God.

What *do* men see in our houses? Others are able to tell a great deal about us and our true character by what they see in our homes. Men judge us by our homes. It is through our homes we most often shape, mold, and determine our destinies. The bible teaches that our homes may even determine our *eternal destiny*. Since this is the case, our homes should be more than just a place in which to eat and sleep.

What do our homes reflect about us? When others see the relationship between you and your mate, what does it tell them? Do they see springs of love flowing in your lives? Do they observe a deep and sincere feeling of fellowship and good will which solve all of the problems and avoid most of them? Do they find a respect for one another's person, and a genuine appreciation for all the gestures shown one for the other?

Or, on the other hand, do others see feelings of bitterness and remorse? Do they observe jealousy and criticism manifested? Do they find constant bickering and berating toward one another? Maybe even toward other members of the family? Think! *What have they seen in your house?*

What do our homes reflect about us? When others look at the relationship between you and your children, what does it tell them? Do they see mountains of love and good will rising from us toward them and from them toward us? Do they find discipline and respect in our children? Do they observe that discipline together with all other forms of provision made and given in the proper ways and amounts?

Or, on the other hand, do others see parents abusing their children producing aggression, rebellion, and discouragement? Do they find disrespect and discourtesy shown toward parents? Do they observe struggles between the parents and the children or among the parents over the children? Do they see the children rebel against the parents? Think! *What have they seen in your house?*

A child of God is a light -- an example -- to others in the world as to the very nature of God. Are others able to see the characteristics of God shining in us when they observe our relationships with each other in our homes? God is love. Christ loved His church and gave Himself for it. Are we willing to give ourselves in our homes? God is a wise and patient father showing both mercy and nurture to his children. Do others see sound judgment and careful consideration shown toward our family as we strive to be gracious and yet achieve discipline in our children? Think! *What have they seen in your house?*

The similarity between our relationship with God and our relationship in the home is amazing. It is no wonder the church is identified as the *house of God* (1 Timothy 3:15). Someone has said the home is the training ground for the church. It is certainly the case that obedience to God is best learned first by obedience to one's parents. Appreciation for God's love is known best by those who love their own children. If one would know how to be a good member of the bride of Christ, he can examine the qualities and characteristics of a good wife. If one would know how to be a faithful child of God, he can examine the nature of a well disciplined and loving child.

However, the reverse is true as well. If one would know how to be a good father to his children, he can look to the fatherhood of God as He provides, protects, and disciplines His children. If one would know how to be a good husband to his wife, he can look to the loving nature of Jesus Christ as He gave Himself up for His bride while expecting submission and reverence from her.

The saying is "*As goes the home, so goes the nation.*" It makes sense. And it makes equal sense to say, "*As goes the home, so goes the church.*" We must look to the word of God for direction and guidance in making our homes that which He would have them be. It offers complete instruction in how we may enjoy all the benefits and blessing God has placed there for our well being. All of us should regularly make certain our efforts are in that direction, and our prayer is that He will truly bless us to this end.

What have they seen in your house?