

Between Two Worlds

This has been a week of storms: severe winds and rains, cancellations and traffic. Here's a good word – "*Storms Pass.*"

Considering the alternative often helps one's perspective. A fellow who had a heavy, heavy pack of worries, cares, and responsibilities of life on his back trudged along. The road seemed rougher and rougher and the pack got heavier and heavier. Finally, he just dropped down and said, "I'm ready to die!" Suddenly, the death angel appeared and said, "Did you call for me?" Rising quickly, he said, "Yeah, would you help me get this pack back up on my back?"

Today we need perspective, a look at the horizon, as we walk another day.

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." (Titus 2:11-14).

It seems that in the midst of giving the qualifications for leadership in Christ's church, Paul breaks out in praise and reminder of how we are living between two worlds. Christ's work on earth purchased our salvation, giving us a new life that is free from sin's destructive affects. In the same verse he tells us that while we are living, we must keep looking for Christ's return. While you're living, keep looking. Vance Havner wrote,

"Two religious leaders of prominence have stated in their own ways that they have not been too excited about the Lord's return – preferring the experience of a living Christ present in their lives now to a coming Christ returning sometime in the future. They make it seem almost as though one has to choose between the two, a present reality or a future hope. Why not have both? ...We do not have to pick one of two alternatives. The New Testament always ties up prophetic doctrine with practical duty. Having the hope of His coming, we purify ourselves now."

Living
Looking
Lessons

How shall we live as we look forward to Christ's glorious appearing?

I. Living

Salvation changes us from the past, and provides us new life for our present.

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age

Coming to Christ for salvation means a clean break from the past.

Deny:

Ungodliness
Worldly desires

Live

Sensibly
Righteously
Godly

Wherever grace exists, there will always be those who abuse it.

Benjamin Franklin wrote to a friend,

“Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have ore need of masters.”¹

Grace *appeared*... epiphaino – *epiphany*

Salvation came by the grace of God, not because we were worthy.
It is offered **to all** but accepted by only a few.

By grace we are saved through faith...

Grace *instructs* us.

Paideuo – instructing a little child.

- Ignorant, helpless tots receiving instruction from a loving parent.

¹ Benjamin Franklin, *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Albert Henry Smyth (New York: MacMillan, 1907), 9:569.

❖ Denial

Reject Ungodliness – *sebomai* – “to fall back before” or “to shrink from” God.

Worship - ungodliness – not to fear or worship.

The attitude is one of non-reverence.

“Asebeia refers to a lifestyle of irreverence, which inevitably breeds contempt for God. Such behavior that despises God we learn to respect”²

Reject worldly desires:

Worldly desires refer to longings that lead to sin.

Grace instructs the believer to enjoy wealth as a gift from God, while the world craves wealth as a means of power, self-gratification, or validation.³

❖ Living contrary to the world

The grace of God in salvation instructs us to turn away, deny and reject futile, destructive behaviors, and pursue living that is...

sensible (of sound mind),

righteous (that which is deemed good by the court of heaven),

and *godly* (reverent to God).

In the present age – Tension: because of the current contradictory culture.

Steve Farrar, in his book, *Finishing Strong*, speaks of only one in ten who are dedicated to God finishing strong. In a letter from his friend who had seen so many guys make serious errors in judgment, he wrote,

“Will I be the one in ten? How can I make sure that I’m the one in ten?”

...Strong men fall. Weak men who find their strength in Another don’t fall. We won’t be the one-in-ten because of our own strength or courage or perseverance or any other human quality. If we finish strong, it will only be because we have tapped into Ultimate Strength, Limitless Wisdom, the Fount of Courage, the Source of Perseverance. He will get us across the

² Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll’s New Testament Insights: Titus*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), p. 299.

³ *Ibid*, 300.

finish line. The very gates of hell cannot make us stumble unless we choose to remove ourselves from His protection and power. ‘His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness.’”⁴

II. Looking

¹³looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

Hope – not wishful thinking, but a certain “assured expectation”

When Christ returns he will rule the world and make all the changes He wants. After Jesus rose He was glorified and will return in His glory. Believers will be glorified when Christ returns.

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. 4:15-17)

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” (Phil. 3:20-21)

We live here with a certain hope of Christ’s return.

Paul writes, it is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27).

“When Christ, who is our life, is revealed,
then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” (Col. 3:4).

When Christ returns our hopes will be realized.

How then shall we live? “Between Two Worlds”

Between Christ’s first coming, in anticipation of His Second Coming.

⁴ Steve Farrar, *Finishing Strong*, (Sisters: Multnomah Press, 1995), pp. 17-18.

III. Lessons

“...who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” (Titus: 2:14)

Christ came to redeem and purify His people.

Redeem – bought out of slaver to sin

Substitutionary sacrifice: He took our place and paid the price.

Purify – catharsis –purification, cleansing, liberation, freeing up

Not only will we share His glory but also His character.

A new affection for good.

A zeal for doing good.

What are God’s people to be like?

1. Live for Jesus because you are *His possession*.

Between you and God, is He pleased with your life?

2. Look for Christ’s return.

looking for the blessed hope and the appearing...

Those who expect Christ’s return realize that they must use time wisely.

The Psalmist wrote in view of the brevity of our lives,

“So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom.”

(Ps. 90:12)

“Put first things first and we get second things thrown in;

Put second things first and we lose both first and second things.”

(The Quotable Lewis- Wayne Martindale)

Our greatest danger in life

is permitting the urgent things to crowd out the important.

Charles E. Hummel