The Engine of Godliness

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Preacher: Nick Louw

[0:00] And then the New Testament reading is from Titus chapter 2 verse 11 to 15.! So the Word of God, as it is in Titus chapter 2 verse 11 to 15.

And to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.
These then are the things you should teach, encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.
And this is the Word of God. It's nice to see you as we come now. This is God's Word. And through this letter that Paul wrote, Titus, God has something to say to each of us this morning.
So let's listen out for what it is and let's pray for his help that we can hear it. Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you speak still today through your Word and by your Holy Spirit who we know is present here with us now.
[1:36] Lord, would you quiet our hearts and would you soften our hearts so that we could hear what you actually have to say to us without refusing to do what it says and without refusing to hear you because of what that will cost us.

Lord, help us to be humble and to realize you are our God. And we must listen to your words because they are life. Help us to listen this morning in Jesus' name. Amen.
Amen. You'll benefit much more if you keep the Bible open in front of you and read God's Word for yourself and have it open in Titus chapter 2.
We're going to be looking from verse 11. And I want to start this morning by asking you a question. What motivates you to be good? What motivates you to actually do what is right and to live the life that God wants you to live?
Because we all have a conscience. Even if we never went to church or read the Bible, we know that there is right and wrong. And the truth is we need motivation to do the right.
[2:49] We know we should do what is right. But knowing we should do what is right is not actually enough. And I think we've all experienced that we actually need extra motivation. We need something to motivate us to live the right way, to do what is good.

And throughout history, those motivations have existed. In all worldviews and all religions, there have been essentially two motivations that have motivated people to do good and not to do bad. And those two motivations are either fear or reward. You either don't do bad things because of fearing eternal or temporary earthly punishment if you do things that are wrong.
And that's what has motivated people often. Or you do good things in your life because you hope that one day that's going to get you something.
That you'll get something out of that. That you'll get a reward for doing what is good. Those have been throughout history, in every worldview and in every religious system that man has created, those have been the motivations to live a good life.
[4:02] Fear or reward or a combination of both the stick and the carrot to get people to do the right thing. But that is also exactly where the true God who made us is different.

In how He gets us to do the right thing in our lives. And in the Bible, we discover that while fear and reward are essentially capable of controlling our behavior on the outside to a certain degree, the motivation that our God gives us to live the good life is actually different to those things.
And it is the only thing that will really change us on the inside. The motivation God gives us is the only thing that will really change us on the inside. Those other motivations can change us on the outside.

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But this, what we discover in God's Word, is the only thing that can really change us. And it is the most powerful motivation we've ever known.
But it is a motivation that we only find here in God's Word. In God's truth. And it is something called grace.
[5:29] Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. Grace. prèsite. prèsically. près Lord. près■ all. près■. près■. près■. près■.

près■. près■. près■. près■. près■. près■.lonal. stopping. trace. près■.■■ lie.■i■. près■. blah.■■■ près■.puter cattle. près■.■■■.unkt12. authorities. près■. près■. I hope you do well. He doesn't leave us there.
Instead, what he does is he goes on in verse 11 to tell us the one thing that is going to make it possible for us to live the life that God wants. It is what I call the engine of godliness, which is grace. And that's what we're going to be looking at this morning. And so have a look from verse 11. In explaining how this godly life that we're called to is even possible, Paul says from verse 11, for, that word is a conjunction, because, this is how you can do it, this is why it's possible, for the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.
[6:41] It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

So look at those verses. Look at them. Please, look at God's word today. Look at these verses, because if you look at them and understand them, they can change your life.
What actually gets us to live the right way? According to these verses, what gets us to live the right way? Is it fear? Is it the hope of reward? No.
What gets us to live the right way, according to this, is the grace of God. Grace. Grace. Well, you need to understand what that is. Grace.
What is grace? What is grace? I mean, we hear about grace a lot, right? If you've been to church, if you've grown up in church, you will have heard that word.
[7:36] You've probably become desensitized to it, to a certain degree, grace. God of grace. We sing it. It's in our Bibles. It's in our prayers. The means of grace. We use it all the time. But what is it?

What actually is this word that appears all over Scripture? Grace. And what Paul says is the motivation to live the right way.
Well, let me tell you what grace is this morning. Grace is the most beautiful thing you will ever hear about. Grace is defined as undeserved and unlimited favor towards someone, no matter what they've done.
Grace is choosing to see a person for who they really are underneath all the mess and the mistakes and all the hurt they may have caused you.
And despite all of that, loving that person and wanting to give them good things that they don't deserve, that is grace.
[8:47] And that love, that pure, beautiful, unconditional, unlimited love, it has now been revealed is the love that the true God has towards people on earth.

The true God who has revealed Himself has shown us that He is a God of grace. That is His defining characteristic of the true God.
But, okay, but how do we know that? That sounds great, but how do we really know? Well, because verse 11 tells us the grace of God has appeared. Something has happened that we can now see the grace of God.
What is that? When did it appear? In the person of Jesus Christ. That's when the grace of God appeared. That's what Paul is talking about when he says the grace of God has now appeared.
We can know this about God because we saw it when He came as the person of Jesus Christ who came. Jesus came to this world. Jesus lived and died and rose to show us who the God who made us really is.
[9:56] because you know no matter what you believe, no matter where you are right now in your spiritual life, you know there's a God out there who made you. Even if you try to suppress that truth, you know that there's a God out there.

And what is He like? What does He want? Well, Jesus came to show us who the God who made us really is because the truth is we were very confused for many, many centuries.

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Religions over history popped up. Hundreds, thousands actually of different beliefs and different religions and different understandings of who this creator who made all this and put us here actually is.
And some were saying well, God is angry. He's an angry God and He is going to punish you if you do not keep His laws and do not toe the line.
And that's, that's, you know, the basis of Islam and other religions like that. That you've got to fear this God. And you better, that's the motivation of fear.
[11:02] Other religions popped up and said no, God doesn't actually care. He's so far removed, He's left us to our own devices and we must just do what we want. Other religions said no, actually there are lots of gods and they actually are just all using us as their playthings for their entertainment.

The polytheistic religions of ancient Greece and Rome and the Nordic countries for example. And so, you had all these religions pop up with all these different ideas of who God really is and God was looking down on all this for hundreds of years until He eventually said guys, time out.
Time out. Let me show you who I am. and He came. He came as Jesus Christ and He said, you guys are so confused, I want to show you who I really am.
And He showed us in Jesus that He deeply loves people. The worst and the most broken people and He wants to love us deeply despite all of our sins and then to really prove that to us, He doesn't need to prove it to us but He wanted to and to prove to us how much He loves us broken sinners. He did the most incredible thing and we see it here in verse 14. Have a look. He gave Himself for us. He gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people who are His very own eager to do what is good.
[12:39] God who created the cosmos the billions of galaxies the sun the planets the mountains all of the stars the ocean that God gave Himself for humans like you and me.

He gave Himself not only in coming down and living in our world and camping out with us but He gave Himself in dying for us as the to pay to pay the payment for our sins that we deserve to pay and yet He wanted to do that instead when we did nothing to deserve it and then He defeated death itself that threat that hangs over us He defeated the power of death to give us a new life in eternity that we could never earn and all you need to do to have all of that is to simply believe it that's it that is God's grace that has appeared that is who the real God is and when you get that when you actually believe that gospel that God the God of the cosmos died for you because He loves you intensely despite all your wrongs and all your sin and all your mistakes
He loves you for who you are underneath all of that when you realize that when you realize that the God of the cosmos loves you like that it will change you it has to change you when you really believe that gospel it will change you and yet in my years as a pastor I've come to realize that many people who come to church every Sunday have not yet got that they've not yet got grace they don't yet get it they don't yet understand it they still think that their relationship with God depends on being good on doing the right things and they come to church to make sure they're doing the right things because they believe that's how God is going to accept me so many people come to church with that understanding still especially what I've found those of us who were raised in Christian homes because think about it
I was raised in a Christian home and I grew up knowing the rules and obeying what I know is the good life as much as I can and I know many people right now I want to talk to you teenagers who are here you kids who are growing up in a Christian home and you know you've got to do the right things your parents have trained you into how to live the right way what God wants of you and you've grown up obeying the rules and very often thinking that you've got to do that you've got to be a good Christian kid to be accepted by God well I'm going to say something that is going to freak your parents out right now you don't need to be that you don't need to be a good Christian kid to be accepted by God all you need to do is really believe what Jesus has done for you really believe the love that God has for you in Jesus now
I'm a parent so I know what you're thinking you're thinking cool I can believe in Jesus and do what I want but the truth is if you really believe that what I've just told you now if you really believe this gospel you won't want to do the wrong things and that is exactly what verse 12 means when it says grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled upright and godly lives grace when we get it it will change us it will teach us to not want to do the wrong things to love this God who loves us so much and is the source of all that is good in our lives but

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when you realize that grace when you realize that all you need to do is believe God that is it and believe that he has already forgiven you and already loved you before you could do anything wrong when you believe that grace then living the right way no longer is something you have to do to be right with God and to please your parents but it's something you want to do because you realize that you already are right with God because he loves you and he has done everything for you and when you realize that you see that is the key that changes everything when a person gets that when a person gets grace that's when a
[18:00] Christian comes alive as millions have through history who have come to understand grace God's grace that changes them and like for example the author of the famous hymn Amazing Grace I don't know if you know his story his name is John Newton and John Newton many of you I'm sure have heard about him but he was a ruthless 18th century slave trader he captured people and shipped them across the seas and sold them and did the most horrible things to people he was profane he was a cruel man he was cynical about religion then one day he faced a storm at sea where he almost lost his ship and died and many believe that that was the moment that he became a Christian but that's not true if you look into it you realize that is the moment that he started fearing

God he was out there there was lightning and he was about to die and he got on his knees and he was like I fear you God God I want to do the right thing but that wasn't when he became a Christian we often mistake that we often mistake the point when a person comes to realize that God is their authority to that's when they became a Christian but that's not true because John Newton still lived for many years trying to do the right thing trying to live the right way because he now feared God but he hadn't yet discovered grace that only came years later when he was stuck on a tropical island I think in the West Indies and he had gone through a series of severe health trials that God used to teach him something and he came to the point then of discovering God's grace years after he came to fear God he actually discovered God's grace and he writes in his memoirs these words I her grace that's when he was changed when he discovered grace and that's when you will be changed too and that grace that he talks about that he discovered that Paul is talking about here that grace of God look at verse 11 has appeared that offers salvation to all people all people all of them everyone no matter what they've done is offered this grace of God to all people to you no matter who you are no matter what you've done this grace is being offered to you in
Jesus Christ and all you've got to do is receive it all you've got to do is believe what God has promised you if you've not yet done that if you've not yet received grace maybe you've been coming to church for ages maybe this is your first time coming to church maybe you've never come to church and you're listening to this recording because a friend who loves you sent it to you because they want you to discover what they've discovered if you've not yet received grace God really wants you to it is a free gift that he is offering and he really wants you to and I really want you to and if that's the case I would love to meet with you in the week and just spend some time with you praying that you might understand and receive this grace because getting that is the key that will change you and it'll do what verse 12 says it will teach you to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self controlled upright and godly lives in the present age in other words grace will teach you to do what
God wants grace will teach you before you do what God wants grace will actually teach you to want what God wants to love what God loves and so to do what is really good and to love it not to do it because it's the rules and it will do that look at verse 12 in this present age why do you think Paul says it's going to teach us to do what is good in this present age I'll tell you why because those things don't fit in this present age this!
present age does not desire what God desires this present age does not do what God wants it doesn't fit but grace is powerful enough to change us to go against the grain of this present age and to do and to want what God wants even in a world that is rebelling against him and because we live in this present age and around us are is a world that is against God who wants to continue to rebel against him and not to do what God wants because of that you can never actually live the life God wants by your own effort you need grace you need to understand grace to be the engine that drives you to want and to do what is good but even then even then just like with any engine you've got to keep it fueled up right an engine needs something to keep it going and so the same as we live in this world this engine that drives us needs fuel and the fuel of godliness we read in the next few verses is the hope of glory have a look from verse 13 we live these new grace driven lives verse 13 while we wait for the blessed hope the appearing of the glory of our great

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[24:25] God and Savior Jesus Christ so you see these verses very important the fuel that keeps us going that keeps us topped up is looking ahead that is that is the key discipline to live this new life is to keep looking ahead and knowing what's coming because of the grace of God when we understand grace first then we can look ahead in absolute assurance of where we're going you see the two work together you can't have the hope of glory without the grace of God without understanding the grace of God that I've done nothing to earn this and God has already given it to me through faith in Christ I'm already righteous he's already secured my eternity when you know the grace of God then you can look forward and that will change how you live today just like anything even on a small scale looking forward to something can help you to live differently!

today you know what I mean I mean it's what November many of you will be going on holiday at the end of December or sometime in December and I don't know about you but looking forward to holiday is the thing that keeps me going through December right especially in ministry December is a very busy month and I'm just looking forward to that time that I can lie in my hammock and read a book and just chill and just enjoy God's good things without stress and work and stuff and you know how looking forward is the thing that will keep us going through a difficult time when it's the same in our lives living these lives in this present age living godly lives we are only able to do that if we keep our minds on what's coming that is what Paul says here because look at what's coming in verse 13 look at what is coming the appearing of the glory of our great
God and Savior Jesus Christ glory is coming glory now that is another word we've heard a lot of and we need to find I think glory what is glory I'll tell you what glory is glory is the unfiltered experience of God's infinite worth glory is finally seeing the God from whom comes all the good we've ever experienced in our lives all the love and all joy and all beauty the source of all of that unfiltered seeing him fully is the most amazing thing that a human could ever experience and when Jesus comes and brings God's glory to earth this place will be transformed all that is wrong in this world will be vaporized by
God's glory and a new world of perfect love and joy and righteousness will emerge out of that world we were made for before time began the world that God designed us for where all our deepest longings will be met and we will experience endless joy and satisfaction that our happiest moments in this life will seem like nothing in comparison to the joy and the amazing experience that God has designed us for you know C.S.
Lewis said something like I'm just thinking it off the cuff but he said if basically if we can never be satisfied by fully satisfied by anything else in this age then it's proof that we've been designed for something else we've been designed for something better and this is true we've been designed for something that this world and this age could never give us and that is the age to come and it's because of God's grace that we can have it it is guaranteed that future is guaranteed because of the death and the resurrection of Jesus that proves to us that new life is real and the death of Jesus that proves to us that our sins have been paid for it is guaranteed for all who believe in that gospel and if that is you you will be there one day because of God's grace alone not because of anything you've done and then not only will God's glory appear and the world will be transformed we too will be glorified we will be transformed to be who we truly are underneath all the sin and the mess the people that
[29:28] God always intended for us to be! God described in verse 14 to purify for himself a people that are his very own eager to do what is good and those you see that describes what God actually designed us for before sin came and messed it up a people who are God's own in right relationship with God enjoying him for eternity and eager to do what is good that if you're a believer that is your identity and knowing that knowing that that is God's intent for you and it always was in eternity past when you believe that then it tells you who you really are it's not the sinner you see in the mirror but you are the saint that God has already saved you to be and that understanding who you really are and where you're!

and what God has done to secure that that is what gives you fuel to live that life now even in this age that is what Paul is saying here that is what God is saying to us Paul is saying to Titus teach these things because God is saying this is true this is who I am do you believe it!
because if you do if you truly do it will change everything I have been in a few ships engine rooms let me tell you a ship's engine is big okay a ship's engine room like on a medium sized vessel is like as big as this church and it needs to be big to drive those thousands of tons of steel through the heavy seas and the waves that ship is going to face out at sea it needs a big engine to punch

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through those waves to keep going in the course that it's going and so do you as you live this life many waves will come to push you off course what's going to keep you going in the right direction the course that God has set for you well I'll tell you this massive engine of grace when you are infinitely loved and nothing will change that that is going to be the engine that will keep you going the right direction in life and you keep that engine running through the storms by remembering where you're going that you have a place in the world to come that you never earned and as long as you trust in
Christ you will never lose let's pray that God would help! us to do that Lord we worship you and we worship you in the true sense that would worship we Lord you are worth more than anything else to us because you've revealed yourself as this amazing God of grace that is who our God really is and we thank you for revealing that in Jesus Christ and we pray that you would help each of us who hear this word from you today to actually really believe that and we know Lord as you've told us when we really believe that it will change us Lord help us to know your grace help us to be reminded of your grace as we read your word and see you and Lord help us to live the good lives you have called us to and plan for us in eternity help us to want what you want to love what you love as we look at grace and as we look forward to where we're going in
Jesus name Amen Amen

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