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THINGS TAUGHT BY GRACE
by Paris Reidhead

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Summary: The grace of God brings salvation and teaches everyone to whom that salvation is brought to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, and look for that blessed hope.

Duration: 46:52 Topics: "Grace"
Scripture References: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Titus 2:11-14

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DESCRIPTION

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In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the scripture over the speaker's interpretation. He encourages the audience to write down the scripture on a 3x5 card and keep it visible as a reminder. The preacher then shares a story about an auction where a woman is sold and the buyer sets her free. This story serves as an analogy for the grace of God, highlighting how Jesus Christ gave himself to redeem and purify humanity. The preacher concludes by urging the listeners to respond to God's grace by living a life that denies ungodliness and embraces righteousness.

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CONTENT

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Young people have failed to realize that we of another generation also love to sing the Psalms in the Scripture, and it does us well to be refreshed in heart and spirit as we've been with this ministry. Psalm 27 is a psalm that each of us should hide in our hearts. You're going to need it before long.

Well that you have it hidden there. Now return please to Titus. I want to take you to Titus tonight, to what I consider to be one of the most

important scriptures in the New Testament.

I suppose if I were to ask how many of you know and can quote John 3 16, there would be every hand raised because the ones who didn't would be ashamed to keep their hands down, and therefore I assume that we all recognize that it is a very important scripture. I happen to consider that Titus 2 11 to 14 is equally important, and I urge you therefore to memorize it. Years ago as a student in Bible school, we had come to us in Minneapolis a man who was known as the country preacher from Charleston, West Virginia, William A. Bias, and over and over again Daddy Bias would say when he began his message, now remember children, the scripture is what God said, and the message is what the speaker thinks God meant.

If you've got to remember one or the other, always remember the scripture because that's what God said. Well here it's most important. If I were you, I'd write it down on a little three by five, type it out you can read that easier.

Write if you write clearly on a three by five card and pin it up on the visor in your car. Now I can say that back in Washington DC area where we live because when we commute, why we have a lot of time, we have a lot of time. I-95 from Woodbridge, Virginia to Washington DC is called the longest parking lot in the world.

About 23 or 24 miles bumper to bumper. My wife teaches school 16 miles from our house and it only requires about an hour and 15 minutes every morning to get there. So you realize she has a great deal of time for memorizing scripture.

I'm not sure she does every day, but she has the time for it. Everyone has the time for it, and so I want you to memorize this scripture.

Hear it now as I read and quote it to you.

It is extremely important. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar. Now don't take that too literally.

Some of us think that we have to strain to be peculiar, but that's not really what the word says. The word is pecuniary and better translated, purchased. Now let's see it.

He gave himself for us that he might purify unto himself a purchased people, zealous of good works. Marjorie and I arrived in Sudan as missionaries on the Sudan Interior Mission in November 1945. We sailed from New York on the first voyage of the Gripsholm after the war.

The Gripsholm was the prisoner exchange ship, a Swedish vessel that was used to bring prisoners from our country overseas and our people from overseas back home. And on this particular voyage, they permitted a group of missionaries to go, and we were among them. The station to which we were sent was about 450, nearly 500 miles south of Khartoum on the White Nile River.

We arrived about 10 o'clock at night. Now understand there was no electricity in Malut. So what we had were some flashlights and a few kerosene lanterns on the bank, the dark bank of the river.

We could see the silhouette of some huts, and we could see in the light of the lanterns some faces, very strange, very different. And many of the men carried long spears. Well, it was an eerie sight.

Believe me, I really wanted to stay right on that comfortable steamer and continue wherever it would go. I wasn't too excited about getting off, but get off we did. And we were, our things, such as we brought with us, were taken off, and we were escorted by the missionaries to the station about a quarter of a mile away.

Well, we came into the house where we'd been assigned to spend the night and went to bed for a little while. About an hour after we'd retired, I heard the hostess in the home prowling around with a lamp. And then I heard a furious beating on the floor.

Well, I couldn't help but get up and find out what it was. And Miss Smith said, I said, what happened? Well, she said, I had to kill a cobra. It was under my bed or alongside my bed.

I, what were you doing now? She said, I'm looking for its mate. They always travel in pairs. So I went back to bed and slept comfortably about six inches off the mattress, not wanting to relax, lest that

mate

should have decided I was the one that had victimized its fellow.

And so I, it was an eerie night, to say the least. The next day after breakfast, a senior missionary came and he said, I'd like to show you around the station. I was only looking for the way back home, to tell you the truth, but he apparently had the idea I was going to stay there for about four years, and so I better get acquainted with where we were.

Well, we saw the houses, the house we were in. I was hoping it was my last sight. It didn't prove to be.

And then the house where he lived, and then the little house that was to become our home, which was made out of mud bricks, plastered with mud plaster, and whitewashed, and had corn stalks around it to keep the beating rain from washing it down into the mud from whence it had come.

And the floor was mud, the ceiling, the roof was thatch, and I saw that.

Then we went a little distance up and we came to the school compound, and there I saw where the students slept and lived, and then one or two classrooms, and ended up in the largest of the buildings, which doubled as a classroom and the place where the local church met.

Our guide at the school was Paul. Paul was the dinka. Paul was headmaster.

Now, he'd been born and reared in the Boer district, which was down on the Sobat River, and as a young man, a young boy, an infant really, about four months of age, Paul had been taken to the witch doctor by his mother and father, and the witch doctor had made an incision in the lower jaw and had scraped the tooth buds off the jawbone so that when he grew, he would never have four lower teeth. And so here he was now, a man, and he didn't have these four lower teeth. And when he was 18, to prove he was a man, he had gone of his own accord to the leaders of the village and said, I want to test.

Now the test in his part of dinka land was for him to, on a given day, go before the elders and lie down on the ground. A little cup in the soil was made for the back of his head. The witch doctor would come with an old spear blade, not more than six inches long, and a stone, a

sharpening stone, and he put the knife in just above the eyebrows,
back
by the ear, and cut clear through to the skull, and did that every
half
inch up his forehead and across where the hairline would be.

And then into these wounds were rubbed soot from the bottom of a
cooking
pot. Now this was the cicatrization, the tribal mark, if you please,
the
evidence of manhood. Now while this was going on, the one to whom it
was
being done, in this case Paul, could not move his muscles, could not
twitch his hands, could not change expression of his eyes, could not
exclaim with the pain, but he was to lie there insensitive as though
nothing were happening to him.

And this was Paul, because had he made a motion, or had he moved, or
had
he exclaimed or shown any pain, they would have stopped right there,
and
the rest of his life he would have been marked as one who had failed
the
test. Paul had completed it. That meant that he was an accepted Dinka
warrior, a man of strength among the people.

But somewhere in his pilgrimage he had encountered the gospel of the
grace of God. Now the text tells us that the grace of God that brings
salvation teaches everyone to whom that salvation is brought
identically
the same thing. Here in this little chapel that day stood Paul and
next
to him was John Phillips.

Now John had been born in Baltimore, he graduated from Wheaton
College,
he'd gotten his master MBA from Harvard Business School, and he'd gone
out to Africa as a missionary of sedentary mission. He was our senior
missionary. He was Presbyterian, been reared in the Presbyterian
Church
there in Baltimore.

And I had been born in Minnesota. I'd come to know the Lord Jesus
there
at old Red Rock Holiness camp meeting at South St. Paul, Minnesota,
where the Methodists of our state met every year to exhort one
another,
instruct one another, and to worship and enjoy the Lord. And it was
there, under the preaching of John L. Brasher and Joseph Owen and
particularly Paul Reese, that God showed me, as though a church

member,
how totally and utterly lost I was, and how desperately I needed the
grace of God that brings salvation.

There stood the three of us. We'd been talking about the Lord. We'd
been
enjoying the Lord, worshiping the Lord, and all of a sudden, without
any
words, just that strange enveloping sense of the presence of God, the
three of us were weeping with joy and adoration and love because the
grace of God had found one in the Sudan and one in Maryland and one in
Minnesota, and we'd all been taught the same thing.

That's what this text declares to us. The grace of God that brings
salvation teaches everyone to whom that salvation is brought
identically
the same thing. And if you find someone that's been born again in
Korea
and someone else in the mountains of Peru and someone in the islands
of
the Pacific, it will be even as it was there.

God has one salvation for all people everywhere. Now the grace of God
that brings salvation, we are told, teaches us several things, and we
need to understand that. First, to assure our own hearts before him
that
we have been born of God.

And secondly, to understand what we must do in behalf of those whom we
have reason to believe have not yet been born of God. The grace of God
that brings salvation teaches us, we are told, number one, to deny
ungodliness and worldly lusts. Now that is a very interesting thing.

Ungodliness. Break it down. Un means no.

No God. Do you remember what the enemy, what Satan said to Mother Eve
in
the garden? Do you remember? If you eat of the fruit that I hold and
offer to you that God's forbidden you to take, you will be like God.
That is the essence of sin.

No God. The choice to reject the God of heaven and earth and to
enthrone
oneself on the seat that he alone is big enough to occupy and to say,
I
will do what I want to do. Sin is a committal of the will to the
principle and the practice of governing one's life, ruling one's life,
being God in one's life.

I will do what I want to do. Isaiah said it one way. He said, all we,

like sheep, have gone astray.

We have turned everyone to his own way. What does that mean? I'll go where I want to go. I'll do what I want to do.

I'll be what I want to be. I'll rule my life. You've heard the song and perhaps the cadence of the melody and the words kind of stirred excitement in you when someone sang very effectively, I am the master of my fate.

I am the captain of my soul. That's the whole essence of rebellion and sin. I'll do what I want to do.

I'm not going to have God tell me how to satisfy my appetites and express my ambitions and fulfill my aspirations. I'm going to be God, ungodliness, no God, but me. I will govern and I will rule.

And that's the attitude of every, every one reaching the age of accountability for the word says, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Now, the first thing that the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us is to deny this no God principle. There's an old fashioned word long out of use.

And it was John Wesley and his great sermon on the circumcision of the heart who said there are certain great words of our faith that have been so long neglected that when we hear them they sound to our untaught ears as though they were heresy. The word to which I refer is that great word that our Lord Jesus used on two occasions in three verses in Luke chapter 13 verses 3 and 5 when he said except you repent you shall all likewise perish. The word is repent, repentance.

Now what is it? What does it mean to repent? Oh I've heard a lot of people say that to repent means to be sorry enough to quit what you're doing and of course that's involved in it but that's not what the word means. The word itself means to change one's mind, to change one's mindset, to change one's intention, one's purpose, one's rule of life, one's governing principle from what it is to what it ought to be. Now go back to what I said a few moments ago.

What is the life principle, the governing principle of the sinner? I told you remember? I'm going to do what I want to do. I'm going to rule my life. I'm going to decide how to be happy.

Now look that can either be an open revolt with cursing or it can be in more subtle and sly terms with this much more refined and educated, much more socially acceptable. But whether it is down and out or up and out the idea is it's out. I'm going to rule my life.

Now he says the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us to deny, to say no to this principle of I'm going to rule my life and that's repentance. Repentance is the change of mind, the change of intention, the change of purpose from what it has been that is wrong to what it ought to be that is right. Sin is I'm going to do what I want to do.

Repentance is I'm going to do what God wants me to do and that's the first thing that the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Now the second thing on the basis of repentance, we are told by Paul when he gave an account of his ministry, he said to the people that heard him that day in the courtroom, he said in Ephesus and then to the Ephesians, I was with you night and day from house to house teaching repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot savingly embrace the son of God until you've repented.

You can intellectually assent to what is written about him anytime, but to appropriate him, you can believe with your head at any moment, but to believe with your heart requires that there be repentance and that's a change of mind. From today on, I'm going to do what God wants me to do and on the basis of that repentance, God releases into our hearts that saving faith that can reach 2,000 years into the past and lay hold of a Jewish man dying on a Roman cross, believing that that man somehow is going to not only change our eternal destiny, but change our character and make us new creations in himself. Now intellectual faith can believe what's written here, but only heart faith can savingly embrace the son of God, for it says with a heart, man believeth unto righteousness.

Now that's the second thing that God does when the grace of God brings salvation. First, deny ungodliness and second, to realize the finished work of Jesus Christ, that he died for us and gave himself for us. Now, the evidence of the genuineness of that faith, the evidence that it

was

indeed heart faith and not just a spurious intellectual assent to what was written is the next statement in that text.

The grace of God that bringeth salvation teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Everyone to whom the grace of God brings salvation is taught by the God who brings it, to live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world. If you find someone that names the name of Christ, living in sin, ignoring the word of God, disobeying the law of God, walking in that way of uncleanness and they claim to be a Christian, only thing I can tell you is that there's something sadly lacking.

You know, years ago I went to a church for a meeting and I'd made the mistake of saying, I'm here for the one purpose of helping you and if any of you will come to me, I'll be glad to enter into whatever prayer burden you have. Now, no one should take on that big a task, the shoulders aren't large enough for that, but I did. And when it was over, a lady came, she was the first one to speak to me, and she said, Brother Reedhead, I want you to pray with me for my backslidden husband.

Now, when I hear that word backslidden, I got a little question, you know, it's never mentioned in the New Testament and not too much in the Old Testament, and I didn't know quite what she had in mind, so I said, well tell me about it. Well, she said, some time ago we had an evangelist come to town, and my husband, who'd been a thief and a gambler and a drunkard and a womanizer, went forward and he professed to receive Christ. And the evangelist gave him one verse of scripture and said, if anybody comes to tell you you aren't a Christian, you wave that verse of scripture at them and that'll drive them away.

And so she said, I said, well, what's his, how's his life? Oh, he still drinks and gambles and I think he's all everything else. But if anybody talks to him, he takes that verse of scripture and waves it at him. And I says, what do you want me to do? She said, I want you to pray that my backslidden husband will be recovered.

I said, I can't. No, and I won't. And she looked at me and she said,

well, that's strange.

You just told these people you were here to help us and, and now I'm the first one here and you tell me you can't and you won't. What do you mean? Well, I said, you asked me to pray that your backslidden husband will return to the Lord. And I said, I can't.

Because, and then I made a statement. I said, you know, ma'am, when you see someone, something that has a bill like a duck and it quacks like a duck and it's got webbed feet and it waddles like a duck and it's got feathers like a duck and it flies like a duck. I don't think you're being judgmental to think it's a duck.

She said, what do you mean? I said, I don't think your husband was ever born of God. I think he's dead in his sins and he's just been inoculated to keep you off his back. Now I said, I'll tell you what I can do and will do.

I'll pray that God will slay your husband, reveal to him his lostness, bring him to the end of himself, and bring him to the feet of Jesus Christ, a broken sinner seeking salvation and pardon and eternal life. And she said, well, you know, I've been a little suspicious about that family. Maybe he wasn't a Christian.

I think she had grounds for a little suspicion, don't you? Because the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. It teaches us that. And to live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world.

When you see someone that says they've been born of God and they're not living soberly and righteously and godly in this present world, I don't know what they have, but they don't have the salvation that the grace of God brings. Because everyone to whom God brings salvation is taught the same thing. Now I didn't write the scripture.

I didn't write it. I'm only here just doing my best to try to tell you what I think it means and asking God the Holy Ghost to burn it in your hearts. Because the grace of God that brings salvation teaches everyone to whom such salvation is brought to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

And then there is the other looking for that blessed hope. You know, salvation has tenses. T-E-N-S-E-S has tenses.

There's that tense that says, I have been saved from the purpose of sin.

That's repentance. I was saved from the penalty of sin.

That's pardon and justification. I am being saved from the power of sin.

That's sanctification.

I shall be saved from the presence of sin. And that's glorification.

The

past perfect tense, the past tense, the present tense, and the future tense.

It's all part of salvation. The grace of God that brings salvation teaches us to look for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he

might redeem us, redeem us, redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto

himself a purchase people zealous of good works. Many years ago, there was a Britisher, a man from Great Britain, the younger son of a very famous noble family.

With no inheritance and no means of making a living, he made his way across the continent country and ended up in California, near Sacramento, near Sutter's Mill, when gold was discovered. And he put in

a claim, and he worked the claim, and it was a rich claim, and he began

to acquire wealth. And because he wanted to go back to England wealthy,

he didn't squander it and waste it, but he took good care of it.

The time came when he was able to sell a claim in the mine for a large amount of money. He transferred the funds through the banks, keeping enough with him so that he could make a trip across America again.

This

time he wanted to go the very southern route, to go through New Orleans

and then take ship from New Orleans to New York and from New York back to England.

He was in New Orleans. At the time that he was there, there still were people, men and women, being bought and sold as slaves. He'd never seen

a human being sold as an animal on a block, sold as chattel, as a

thing.

He did, as most of us who are tourists have done, he went down to the slave market. The difference is, when I was there, it was just history of what had happened, and he was there while it was happening. He stood around watching this with great interest, saw some people sold, and then he saw some women being brought to the block, and one of them was a very unusually beautiful woman.

He heard the ribald remarks of the people that were there. He heard what they had to say about what would be done with that woman. He saw one particular man over there whom they said, well, he'll buy it.

He's the one who buys all women like that. He was filled with fury and with anger against what he'd heard, and so as that particular woman was brought to the block, he saw the brisk bidding at first, and then this one man that had been pointed out seemed determined to buy that person. After a while, it looked as though she would have, no one was going to bid against him because he was a very vengeful man, and he threatened anyone who would bid against him any further.

But this English miner returning home, it didn't stand in fear or awe of him, and so he put in a bid. The man raised it, he put in another, he raised it again, and then to get the matter over, the Englishman doubled the last bid, and everyone gasped and wondered if it was an honest bid. Do you have the money, said the auctioneer.

I have the money, and he knocked her down. The sale was complete, and the Englishman bought, went over, paid the money in gold, and went to the end of the block where the one who was there had the rope or leather strap around the woman's neck, handed it to him, and as she had come down the block, she was standing on the next to the last step, and as he approached, she had been gathering in her mouth a mouthful of saliva, and she, just as when she got near enough so she could without missing, she spat that mouthful of saliva right square in his face, and hissed through her clenched teeth, I hate you. He took the back of his hand and wiped the saliva from his eyelids and from his face, and turned and

walked, she behind him with the strap in his hand.

The way opened through the crowd. Everyone was amazed that this man had paid more for this woman than any other person had ever been sold in the New Orleans slave market. They walked down the street and down another street.

The man made inquiry that the woman couldn't hear, was directed to another street and still another, and finally after another inquiry, to a door that led upstairs to an office on the second floor, and he walked up those stairs, and she behind him. She stood there, not breaking, not running. She knew the price of doing that was death in Louisiana.

She stood there quietly, and he went over and asked for the service he wanted, and man said, I can't do that. Well, you certainly can do it. I'm insisting on it, and it's according to the law.

Well, I'll have to get my manager, and so the manager came out, and he protested, and the man insisted. Finally, the papers were signed, and the money was exchanged. He took the paper.

He walked over to this woman whose face was still contorted with venomous hatred, and he said, here are your manumission papers, and she said, what? Here are your manumission papers. You are free. An amazement.

Oh, she said, you paid more for me than anyone has ever been cost in New Orleans before. Yes, they tell me so. Said, you bought me at that price to set me free? Yes, I bought you to set you free.

You, you paid that much so that you could set me free? Yes, and I'm giving you money so that you can go to the north where you'll never be subjected to this again, and you know what she did? She dropped down on her knees, and she knelt over, and put her face into his rough miner's boots, and began to bathe those boots with her tears, hot burning tears, as she cried over and over again. You bought me to set me free? You bought me to set me free? You paid that much to set me free? Then she looked up, and she said, oh sir, I do not know your name or who you are, but all I want to do for the rest of my life is be your servant. Can

you, will you let me be your servant? He said, no.

I go back to England, and she then with amazement stood and said, never before have I understood what it means. You bought me to set me free. The grace of God that brings salvation teaches everyone to whom God brings salvation, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

For the great God and Savior Jesus Christ gave himself for us, not a purse of gold, but he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a people zealous of good works. Friend, if you have had the grace of God bring salvation to you, you realize that the only response appropriate to such a gift is to kneel down and bathe his nail-scarred feet with your tears and cry out to him, Lord Jesus, as long as I live, I want to be your servant. I want to serve you.

Once you understand what it costs the Lord Jesus to redeem you, never again can you flirt with worldly lusts. Never again can you have pleasure in those things that cost him his poured-out life. Oh, if all you have is an intellectual sent to the plan of salvation, or some ritual that's been performed upon you at some time in the past, you won't understand what I'm talking about.

But if the grace of God has brought salvation, then John said, these are written that you might have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ, whom to which I add who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a purchased people, zealous of good works. What do you have? What do you have? Do you have just the form, or do you have the substance? Has the grace of God brought salvation? To you, that's the most important question in all the world, and the most important time in all the world is the moment that you discover that you have less than reality. We're here tonight, the hour is early, there's no better time in all the world for you to take a moment to ask your heart, has the grace of God brought salvation to me, and to my husband, and to my children, and to my wife, and to my friends? Let's bow in prayer.

Right now, it's time for you to decide that from today on, as long as you live, you're going to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, if you've never done so, or if you've done so in a cheap and light and shallow manner, without reality. From today on, my purpose is to please him, to

serve him, to obey him, to do all that he would ask. I renounce sin, I renounce the right to rule, I totally and completely abandon myself to him, do a lifetime of service, with our heads bowed and our eyes closed,
you ask the Lord where you are in relation to him.

Are you looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ? Is that the great joy of your life, that he might come before morning? If he doesn't, you're prepared to live tomorrow to his glory, but you long to see him even so come quickly Lord Jesus, the blessed hope of the believer. That's the joy of those to whom the grace of God has brought salvation. If you're here and you have discovered need, the wisest thing for you to do is to make it known to someone whom you trust.

There are many here, pastors, people, who'd be so glad to pray with you and counsel with you and share with you our Heavenly Father. We lift our hearts to thee tonight to thank thee, that around the world thou in thy great grace are bringing salvation to men and women like Paul and John and me, and there are so many here to whom that salvation has come. Now we've all been taught identically the same things.

We know exactly who we are when once we've met thee, and so we're praying, Father, tonight that there should be those among us who are not sure, not certain, that they'll discover their true state and deal wisely with it. All of us have loved ones and friends whom we have good reason to believe do not know thee, whom to know is life eternal. And we do ask thee, Lord, that we might be, our lives might be of such blessings, so transparent and so revealing the love and beauty of Christ, that they're going to be reminded of Him and want to know Him because they've lived and walked with us.

And so, Father, we ask now thy blessing upon this service as we close. Many decisions are being made and have been made, and more that yet will be made. We give thee thanks for all of them in Jesus' precious holy name.

Amen.

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