

Emmanuel Baptist Church
December 31st, 2023
Titus 2 – “Living in the Light of Our Blessed Hope”

I. Introduction

Good morning, as always it is a great privilege and an honor to have this opportunity to worship with you and to preach to you from God’s Holy and Life-Giving Word.

Well, we have just concluded our series entitled “Christmas in Ruth”. Where we spent 4 weeks going through the book of Ruth with a particular focus on how that little book pointed us to the First Advent or First Coming of the Lord,... that Chosen One who would be born in the little town of Bethlehem, of whom the angel said.... “You shall call his name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.”

It is always good for us to take time to focus in on the absolute necessity of the first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we did so from the book of Ruth by looking at how God by way of providence orchestrated all the events of human history, the big macro national level events and the little micro individual level events for one great purpose...

So that when the fullness of time had come... God would send forth his Son... born of a woman, born under the law... to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

All of Redemptive History in the Old Testament was leading to one monumental moment... and that was the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity.... The Word became Flesh and dwelt among us... and thus you shall call his name Emmanuel which means God with us.

And while the Second Person of the Godhead was with us in the flesh, He kept the law perfectly in that flesh, as a man, and then he delivered up his body to suffer under the wrath of God in our place that we might have life, and life forevermore. And then God proved that this work of His Son would be efficacious for salvation for all who would trust in Him...by raising Him from the dead on the third day.

In other words... in the first coming of our Lord... the Grace of God appeared bringing salvation for all people... not just people of Jewish ethnicity but for all people... For God so loved the world (Jew and Gentile alike) that He gave His only Begotten Son (that’s the First coming of the Lord) so that whosoever should believe upon Christ should not perish but have everlasting life.

And that Grace of God that appeared is still active today and it is being offered to you... if you are still in your sins and outside of Christ... if you are not a believer, if you are not a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.... there is hope for you... for the grace of God has appeared.

And so I urge you... believe upon Christ and live...

That's what Christmas is all about... it is all about the appearing of the Grace of God in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ bringing salvation to all people who will but submit to His Lordship and trust in His ability to save to the uttermost all those that come to Him by faith.

And so you see, the first coming of our Lord is absolutely central to the Christian Faith... there is no Christianity without the first coming of the Lord...

But, remember... the grace of God appeared in the Person of Jesus Christ for what purpose?

To bring salvation to all people...

And that's a key point... What is salvation? What are we saved from? And what are we saved to?

Well the answer to those questions does not terminate in this present age... but rather the answer to that question finds its resting place in the age to come.

The first coming of the Lord and the salvation that he brings is not the end of the story, but rather it points us forward to the very reason he came in the first place...

It points us forward to the Second Coming of the Lord and the completion of this salvation that He has wrought for His people.

And so, because we have just spent a month looking back to the first coming of our Lord... I think it would be appropriate for us today... to cast our eyes forward to the second coming of our Lord... for the year of our Lord 2023 is coming to an end today... and thus quite literally we are another year closer to the consummation of all things... when our Lord will appear in glory bringing final and terrible judgment upon the wicked and a glorious salvation to His people.

And so... as we cast our eyes forward to the second coming of our Lord... I would like us to do so by looking together at the second chapter of the book of Titus...

I do invite you to take a copy of the Scriptures and turn with me to Titus chapter 2.

Our main focus this morning will be on verses 13 and 14 but for the sake of the context I would like to read in your hearing the entirety of the 2nd chapter

This is the Word of the Living God, may we hear it as such.

II. Text (Titus 2: 1-15)

2 But as for you, teach what accords with sound[a] doctrine. 2 Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, 4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. 6 Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. 7 Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, 8 and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. 9 Bondservants[b] are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering (which means to not steal), but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

15 Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

Thus the reading of God's Word and His people said: Amen!

Prayer:

Let us pause now and ask the God of Grace to help us as we consider His Word this morning:

“Our Father and our Most Gracious God... You are the One who did not leave humanity without hope... but at the appointed time your Grace appeared in the Person and Work of Your Son... the Lord Jesus Christ... Father, our great desire this morning is that you may give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ... having the eyes of our hearts enlightened, that we your people may know what is the hope to which we have been called... and what is the immeasurable greatness of your power toward us who believe, according to the working of your great might... Oh Lord, I do pray that you would remind your people of the grace that appeared in the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and that you would also encourage our hearts by directing our hope to the appearing of the glory of Christ and that these two great realities would stir our hearts up to love and good works and thus adorn the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ... and it is in His name we do pray... Amen!

III. Exposition

Well, as we begin our exposition of this text, I want to first lay out some of the context of our passage and then after doing that I want to give you an outline of the points that I would like to cover this morning and then we will begin looking at those points together.

Context:

So what is the context of this passage?

Well, the book of Titus is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to one of his fellow laborers in the gospel named Titus. Paul had recently completed a journey to the island of Crete. Which is a large island in the Mediterranean Sea. During which journey many people heard the true gospel and came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ across the island. And so there were many believers across this island, but at that point there were very few if any established local churches that were faithfully teaching the Word of God week in and week out. Additionally, the island was infected by false teachers and their soul-destroying teaching.

And so, what Paul does in this letter... is he charges his co-worker Titus, that he left in Crete, to set things in order on the island...

Which by the way is a reminder that the work of the Great Commission is not just making disciples through the preaching of the Gospel... but it is the long and hard work of establishing faithful local churches. That's what he meant by put things in order.

And so, the great need of the island of Crete was for there to be faithful local churches that taught sound doctrine...

Well the more things change the more they stay the same.... The great need on the island of Crete in the 1st century is the great need in our land today... the planting and establishing of faithful local churches that teach sound doctrine.

Well, in order for there to be faithful local churches there needed to be faithful men to pastor these churches. And so we read in Titus 1 that Paul tells Titus the following: "This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you"

But Paul doesn't leave Titus in the dark concerning which men should be appointed to the office of elder. He goes on to list the qualifications that must be present in a man in order for him to serve in the office. He must have the character qualities necessary for the office, those are non-negotiable... and in addition to these character qualities in verse 10 it says: "He must hold firm to the trustworthy Word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also rebuke those who contradict it."

And then in verse 11, Paul goes on to explain in strong terms the false teaching that is taking place in Crete... the very false teaching of which the faithful men that are appointed to the office of elder must be able to rebuke and replace with instruction in sound doctrine.

Paul then goes on... in chapter 2 to instruct Titus in the sound doctrine that he must teach and further that he must entrust to other faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

And so our text today in chapter 2 falls in this section of Paul's letter where he is instructing Titus in the sound doctrine which must be the content of the elders teaching and thus it is to form the very foundation for healthy local churches in the island of Crete....

And by extension this sound doctrine must be what we teach today as a faithful local church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so with that context in place in our minds... let us now dive into our text to see what is at the center of this sound doctrine that must be taught in every faithful church.

Notice first if you would... verse 1 of chapter 2...

It states: "But as for you... in contrast to the false teachers... teach what accords with sound doctrine"

What follows in the next 10 verses is what Paul means when he says: teach what accords with sound doctrine...

We can summarize these verses in the following way:

These verses are the practical implications of sound doctrine as it is worked out in our lives and relationships... as older men and women... as younger women and men... and even as slaves or bondservants.... All called to live godly lives of spirit wrought self-control.

Dear ones... if you are being taught sound doctrine... its effect in your lives should be Spirit-wrought self-control. That is to bring your whole self into subjection to the revealed will of God in His Word in every aspect of your life.

Is this true in your life... Are you walking by the Spirit?

This is in sharp distinction to the effect that the false teaching was having on the people of Crete.

You see the false teaching on the island of Crete... produced a people who professed to know God, but yet in their works they denied him and thus they were rendered unfit for any good work.

And this is important for us to grasp... May we be ever mindful that Christ did not come merely to change our status legally... that we may merely profess that we are in a right standing with God... but he came that we would be changed... that we would be a people who would become godly both legally but also actually...

You see brothers and sisters... if we make a profession that we know God... which is to claim that we are holy or set apart for Him.... If we make that claim and then to proceed to live in such a way that contradicts the reality of our profession... this does nothing but bring reproach upon the gospel... it does not adorn the doctrine of God our Savior, but rather it distorts and mangles the doctrine of God our Savior.

Instead, Christ came that we would be a holy people for his own possession both legally that is in our justification but also actually or morally in our regeneration and sanctification.... thus adorning the Doctrine of God our Savior.

To put it simply... A Saved Life is a Changed Life.... Salvation produces holiness in a man. Which is the wonder and glory of the work of salvation... that a sinner, who was an enemy of God... can be changed into a person who loves the Lord and does His will.

And so, the question is: What is this sound doctrine that causes people to be godly... to live lives of Spirit-wrought self-control... to be zealous for good works?

In other words... what truths... what realities... enable us to keep the imperatives that have been given to us in verses 1-10 of chapter 2?

Well I think the answer for us is found in verses 11-14 of our text:

Let's read those verses together once again:

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

What a glorious passage of Scripture.... this is sound doctrine that is able to transform you into godly people to the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...

So what is Paul laboring to teach in these verses of Scripture?

Well, I think foundationally what we see here is that Paul is making the point that we as Christians live in between.... two great appearances.

There is the future appearing of Christ in glory and there is the past appearing of Christ bringing salvation to all people.

And thus sound doctrine teaches us... it instructs us... to be a people who look in two directions with the eyes of faith. Backwards and Forwards.

We are to be a people who look forward with hope to the glorious return of Christ, and we do this based upon the foundation of past grace that has been wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ in His first appearing... And so, we look forward with anticipation and confidence because we have this anchor for our soul which is the past grace of Christ in our lives.... And Lord willing I'll flesh that out more as we move forward.

And so this looking to future glory and this looking to past grace produces in the believer a present zeal for good works.

And so those are the 3 points that I want to consider with you from this passage:

1. Future Glory
2. Past Grace
3. Present Zeal

Now before we jump into these various points... I think it would be helpful to see how these various points are really just showing us the movement of redemptive history between the first and second advents or comings of Christ... particularly as it relates to what is called the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven.

In Christ's first coming, what did he come preaching?

We saw this not too long ago in the Gospel of Mark. He came preaching the gospel of God saying that the Kingdom of God is at hand... repent and believe the gospel.

The reason He said that the Kingdom of God was at hand was because, well it was... and the reason it was, was because He the King was present...

Now... What Christ did in His first coming... Is that He inaugurated the Kingdom of God... He ushered in the very Kingdom of Heaven on earth....

Yet we understand... that this coming of the Kingdom in the first coming of Christ was only the Inauguration of the Kingdom.

This is clearly taught throughout the New Testament and in particular in many of the parables:

Many of the parables teach that there are 3 phases of the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. First, There is the inauguration of the Kingdom at the first coming of Christ.
2. Secondly, there is a period of the continued growth of the Kingdom throughout the entirety of this present age
3. And thirdly or lastly, there is the final consummation of the Kingdom that takes place at the return or second coming of Christ

I'll just pick one parable to illustrate the point:

That parable being the Parable of the Net... now in this parable, what is taking place?

Well it begins with a net that is thrown into the sea...that's the first phase of the kingdom of heaven... that's the inauguration.

In the Second phase what happens?... The net gathers fish.... That is the Continued growth of the Kingdom in this present age.

And then we have the Third phase.... There is a day of reckoning, a day of judgment... The net is pulled out of the water... and The bad fish and the good fish are separated... the bad fish are destroyed... the good fish kept... this is the final consummation of the Kingdom that takes place at the end of the age.

And so, as we consider the Kingdom of God... we look back to the Inauguration of the Kingdom brought about by the first appearing of Christ... We look back at the grace of God that has appeared bringing salvation to all men...

But we also look forward in hope to the glorious consummation of what Christ began...

One writer has said the following:

Grace is glory begun... and Glory is grace perfected.

And thus in Christian theology... in sound doctrine... there is both a push and a pull going on that is transforming the people of God until they reach the end goal of their salvation.

Another writer has stated: "We are pushed from behind by the wonder of grace and we are pulled forward by the hope of glory."

And so dear ones I hope you see the wonder of this... if you would live godly lives in this present age... you must be fixated... you must be consumed with looking with amazement at the grace of God that has been revealed in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in his first coming... you must preach the gospel of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ to yourself everyday.

And at the same time you must be irresistibly pulled towards heaven by the hope of future glory.

Well let's begin by going through our 3 points:

1. The first point is Future Glory

Sound doctrine teaches us that we are to set our hope on future glory...

Our text in verse 13 uses two particular words to describe this... it says that we are waiting for our "Blessed Hope".

Now it is true that currently as the people of God, as Christians... we are presently blessed...

Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven.

But although we are presently blessed... we are still awaiting the fulness of blessing.

Further, Paul uses the word Hope... It's a blessed hope...

In the context of Titus, Paul uses the word hope in a very particular way.

If you would notice with me in chapter 1 and verse 2... It states... "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began."

And then notice chapter 3 verse 7... "so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

The blessed hope of chapter 2:13 is the consummation of eternal life.

Dear ones that's what we are hoping in... we are hoping of our eternal life...

Yes... it is true that we presently have eternal life...

John 17:3... "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

If you have been saved... if you have been born again... you have been brought into a covenant relationship with God... you know God... and what a glorious present reality that is... but we do not yet God like we will in glory...

"For now we see through a glass darkly, but then in glory we will see face to face.... Now we know in part, but then we shall know even as we are known."

And so let's dig a little more into what our blessed hope consists in:

1. Eternal Life in Our Bodies

First I want us to see that sound doctrine teaches us that we must encourage ourselves with the reality that we will experience the consummation of eternal life in our bodies.

2 Corinthians 5:1-2... “For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens... for in this tent (our earthly bodies) we groan... longing to put on our heavenly dwelling... that is our glorified body.

Romans 8:22-25

“For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”

Clearly brothers and sisters... our blessed hope consists at least in part in the glorification of our bodies... we don't have glorified bodies yet... we have not seen a glorified body... but we wait for it eagerly...

And what a hope this is... for we all know... some more than others... the pain of a fallen body... a body that is seeing corruption...

But take heart... for we have a blessed hope... the aches, the pains, the wearing out of this present body, and even the death of this body... is only temporary...

Revelation 21:4 – “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

The things of this present age will pass away... and the things of the age to come will become our reality... one such thing being a glorified body....

And so dear saint encourage yourself with that blessed hope.

2. A Glorified Soul

But dear ones, that is not the totality of our hope... we are not just bodies... no we have a soul as well... and part of our blessed hope is the blessing of a glorified soul.

That's we long for as the people of God.

The painful reality that we all know as believers is that we have remaining sin... we still struggle with sin...

I am reminded of that quote by William Sprague... “Impress upon the young convert from the very beginning that God has called him into his kingdom to struggle with the corruptions of his own heart.”

In this present age... during this phase of the Kingdom... we struggle against our sin...

But our blessed hope... is that one we will be total free from all sin...

Paul picks up this hope in Galatians 5:5 where he says: "For through the Spirit by faith we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness."

This hope of righteousness is not referring to our justification... we already possess that as believers in this present age... no he's referring to our blessed hope that one day we will be personally actually and totally righteous.

I don't know about you but that encourages me dear ones...

I'm tired of my sinfulness... and how wicked I am in my heart... I am eagerly waiting to be totally free from sin.

This freedom from sin... this power of sin and its grip on our hearts... has been inaugurated in our new birth... but it is consummated in glorification.

At this I wanted to draw your attention to question 41 of the Baptist Catechism...

The question is: "What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?"

The Answer: "At the resurrection believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged, acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed, both in soul and body, in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity."

This is what we are waiting for... This is our blessed hope...

"Beloved, we are God's children now, but what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."

And that leads me to my next point...

The catechism question that we just read says that believers receive the blessing of soul and body from the very hand of Christ Himself.

You see... our blessed hope is not only in the reality that we ourselves will be transformed... as amazing as that is...

But more than that... our blessed hope is that we are awaiting the appearing of the glory of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

That's what our text says... yes we are waiting the fullness of eternal life in both body and soul... but that is an addendum to the main blessing... which is Christ Himself...

We sang it earlier in one of our hymns... the bride eyes not her dress... but her dear Bridegroom's Face...

Yes, we will be ecstatic about having a glorified body and a glorified soul... but our focus will be on gazing upon the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ of whom we shall see face to face.

That One now unseen that we love... on that Great Day... we will see our Beloved, and not just with the eyes of faith... but with our actual eyes.

And so this second appearing of the Lord will be a glorious appearing...the text says it will be the appearing of the glory of Christ.

Now this is not to say that there was no glory in the first appearing of Christ.

But in the first coming of Christ... His glory was veiled. He came as a baby born to a common family. Isaiah prophesying about this first coming says: "He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Jesus Himself says that His glory is hidden in his first coming... it is only to those whom God has chosen to reveal the glory of Christ too that were able to see it...

In John 1 it says that in his first coming we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

But who is it saw that glory? Only those, who were given eyes to see.

In John 3, Jesus tells Nicodemus... you cannot even see the Kingdom of God unless you be born again. You cannot see the glory of Christ revealed in His first coming unless you be born again.

And this teaches us something of the nature of the Kingdom of God prior to the Second Coming...

In this present age... the Kingdom of God is invisible to the world... the glory of the King is only seen by those who have been given eyes to see that glory... and praise God for His grace that has had such mercy upon us...

For flesh and blood has not revealed the glory of Christ to us... but the Father in Heaven has made Him known to us.

But at the Second Coming... this glory of Christ will not be veiled... it will not be hidden to unbelievers... now it is revealed to believers and believers alone... but on that great day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This glory will be evident for all to see...

And Jesus spoke about this revealing of His glory at the second coming quite often during His earthly ministry...

In Matthew 16:27 – He says: “For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of His Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done”

In Matthew 24:30 – “And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”

In Matthew 25:31 – “When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.”

And on that great day the Glorious Christ will bring all people before His judgment seat... there will be no mistaking who the King is on that day, for He is Lord of all.

Further... in the first coming of Christ... His deity is veiled... and there is more focus placed upon his humanity.

But our text in verse 13 says: that this appearing will be of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ...

Now, some may mistakenly read this verse to mean.. that this appearing is talking about God the Father and the Savior Jesus Christ...

But the context of Titus rules out that interpretation...

Paul in Titus has a pattern of referring first to God the Father as Savior and then very soon after He will refer to Christ as Savior.

Notice with me if you will in Chapter 1:3 – it says “I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior... referring here to God the Father as Savior.

But then notice verse 4: - Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior... So here the Son is referred as Savior.

Now flip over to chapter 3 and notice verse 4... “But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared... referring here once again to God the Father

But then drop down to verse 6 – “whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.” ... referring to God the Son.

Well in chapter 2 we have the same exact pattern...

Notice verse 10- “so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” ... again referencing God the Father

And so with that in mind we should expect that a couple of verses down in verse 13 in our text... that this great God and Savior Jesus Christ is referring to God the Son.

This is important to understand because... this text clearly points to the reality that at the Second Coming the Deity of Christ will be abundantly clear for all to see.

Now...as we have considered this future glory.... This blessed hope that we are to be eagerly waiting for.... The question that we must ask is this: “Is this your Longing?”

Are you setting your hope on the Blessed Hope or are you setting hopes no lesser things?

Dear ones... any hope other than the Blessed Hope will disappoint you and it will lead you astray...and it will be powerless to enable you to live godly lives in this present age....

If you are hoping in your marriage... or a job... or children... or health... or money... you are hoping in broken cisterns... that cannot satisfy you and that cannot enable you to live as we are commanded to live in this passage.

Think of Hebrews 11... the hall of faith as we call it... those saints who suffered so much and yet accomplished so much... what were they hoping in?

Were they hoping in things of this world? Were they hoping in something that they would inherit in this present age?

No... they had set their hopes set on a better country... that is a heavenly one... therefore God was not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city...

A city by the way that they are still waiting for... for they will receive their blessed hope together with us at the same time... on that great day when our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ appears in Glory.

And so dear believer... are you one who loves the appearing of the Lord?...

Honestly, assess yourself... do you love His appearing? Or is the Second Coming of Christ something that never crosses your mind?

Remember what Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:8... he says that the crown of righteousness is the reward for all those who love the appearing of the Lord.

For those of you who love the appearing of the Lord there is a crown of righteousness laid up for you...

But for those of you who do not love the appearing of the Lord... those of you who do not love the Second Coming of Christ... if you remain in that condition there is no crown of righteousness for you, but only the fearful expectation of judgment.

And if that is your condition... what should you do? You should look upon Christ as He is revealed in Scripture and you should set your love upon Christ... and if you love Christ, you will love His appearing...

And so you see... at the center of this passage... and remember the context... this passage is about sound doctrine... and so at the very foundation of sound doctrine... is Christ and love for Him...

What is the Great Commandment? ... to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.

And this leads us to the next point in our passage...

This passage is about setting our love and our hope upon the Return of Christ based upon who He is and what He has already done...

And so, in verse 14 what Paul does... is that he reminds us of who this Jesus is that is coming again...

Notice the verse: "Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."

The Jesus that we are waiting for... is the One who Gave Himself for us...

Jesus Himself said this about Himself in Matthew 20:28... He said – "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

This is who we are waiting for? We are waiting for our precious Savior... who gave His life that we might have life and life eternal.

Dear ones.. we must never get over the fact that Lord of Glory would give Himself for us...

The apostle Paul never got over it...

Listen to him in the following verses:

Galatians 1:3-4 – “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age.”

Galatians 2:20- “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Ephesians 5:2 – “And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

So we’ve been talking our Blessed Hope... we’ve been talking about Future Glory...

But why does Paul return us back to focusing on past grace?

Well the answer is this: Our Future Hope is rooted and grounded in the work of Christ already done.

Philippians 1:6... “For He who began a good work, will bring it to completion.”

The reason that our blessed hope is a certain hope is because Who Christ and because of What Christ has already done on our behalf.

And what has he done according to verse 14 of our text?

Two things:

1. It says He gave himself to redeem us from all lawlessness
2. And secondly to purify us and make us into a people for his own possession

Dear ones... each and everyone of us was born into sin... we were born guilty and corrupt... we were sons of disobedience... in a word... we were lawless... we were law breakers... and we were children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

But Christ in His great love gave Himself for us in order to redeem us from lawlessness. He died paying the penalty for our law breaking.

And if He loved us in that way... He’s not going to go back on what He’s done... if He has redeemed you from Lawlessness He is not going you let you fall back into lawless and be lost...

He has paid your penalty once and for all... And thus He cried on the cross... It is Finished...

And because that is true... the fact that He’s coming again for you is a sure and certain reality. If he has made you alive not by virtue of the New Birth... He will certainly raise you up on the last day into glory.

Secondly it says... that He has initiated the work of purifying for Himself a people for His own possession.

He has given Himself to not only redeem you from lawlessness but to actually make you pure... He will sanctify you completely... and your whole spirit and soul and body will be kept blameless until Christ comes again...

As it says in 1 Peter 2- "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession."

If you are a part of Christ's special possession... a part of His inheritance presently...

Then you can have all confidence that when Christ appears again... He will send out his angels and He will gather from the four corners of the earth all of his elect.... for you are his special possession.

Dear saint... may you be encouraged by that reality this morning...

Well now... we must quickly look at our 3rd and final point.

We've looked at future glory and we've looked at past grace... for this is sound doctrine... and the result of sound doctrine is to be: present zeal for good works.

Notice what our text says:

It says that past grace trains us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.... And then it is our Blessed Future Hope that motivates us to be a people zealous for good works.

Sound doctrine of what God has done for us in the past and what He will do for us in the future is what motivates us to live for God in the present.

I've often heard the critique that we must not be so heavenly minded that we are of no earthly good. And perhaps you've heard that statement as well.

I dare say, I think the apostle Paul would have a bone to pick with that critique...

I think it is clear from our passage this morning....

That what Christ would urge us to do... Is to be so heavenly minded, that you are made of much earthly good.

Dear ones... as it says in Hebrews 10... as the Great Day of Christ Return draws ever closer... may we stir up one another to love and good works in this present age... and may we do by this by pointing one another to sound doctrine...

By reminding one another of the past grace of God that appeared in the first coming of Christ and also by pointing one another forward to our Blessed Hope... which is the appearing of the glory of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ...

Brothers and sisters may we as a church family walk together... being pushed forward by the wonder of past grace and being pulled forward by the glory of our Blessed Hope....

And I'll end with this...

If you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ... if you are not following Him... if you do not love Him as evidenced by your lifestyle... then the return of Christ is not good news for you... it will be a dreadful day for you...

But take heart... The Grace of God for sinners has appeared in the first coming of Christ... and He offers salvation for each and every person who will trust in Him...

Would you do that today? ... and then would you follow Him along the narrow road that leads to the Blessed Hope of Eternal Life.

Dear ones, may we understand... that time short and eternity is long... may we live in the light of our Blessed Hope...

Let's pray...