

Saving Grace, Part 2

Titus 2:11

56-19

Let's open our Bibles again to Titus chapter 2. And for those of you who are visiting with us, we are in an ongoing study of the book of Titus. We just take one book after another and go through it, and what a joy and privilege it is to deal with every word of God. The Scripture says, "Every word of God is pure," and we want to know all of the pure truth as God has laid it out. So we find ourselves in Titus chapter 2.

And as we learned through our study of Titus, there is a strong emphasis in this letter on God as Savior. A fact, of course, that is emphasized in the Old Testament. Isaiah 45:21 says, "There is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior." Isaiah 43:11, "And there is no Savior besides Me." God likes to speak of Himself as a saving God. As far as we are concerned that is the most important component about His character that He is a God who saves, for it is in that that we receive the eternal benefit of His goodness and His grace.

The New Testament makes the same fact very evident. In 1 Timothy 2, verse 3, it speaks "of God our Savior," verse 4, "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." God is a saving God. And that is a very strong theme that runs through Titus.

Here in chapter 2 we find that the essence of this chapter is that God, who is a Savior, wants to display His saving power through the church so that others may be saved. God wants to demonstrate to sinners His saving power by the very transformation in the lives of believers. In fact, you remember back in verse 5 that it says that the reason we are to behave ourselves as outlined is that "the Word of God may not be dishonored," in verse 8 "that the opponent may be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us," and verse 10, "that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect." We are to so live to exalt the Word, silence the critics, and draw people to God as a saving God. We are to live lives that demonstrate that God can turn sinners into saints.

People should be asking what the prophet asked in Micah chapter 7, "Who is a God like Thee who pardons iniquity? Who is a saving God like Thee?" Nothing God has ever done, nothing God will do in time displays the fullness of His glory like His salvation. His saving work puts Him on display, puts His power, His justice, His mercy, His grace on display.

Now it is the heart of God to save sinners. God desires to save and to transform sinners so that they may do good works, and those good works may demonstrate to other sinners the evidence of His saving power that they might be drawn to Him for the same salvation.

So what we're seeing here, then, is Paul writing to Titus and saying, "It's important, Titus, that you remind the church that the reason they exist, the reason they're in the world, is to display God's

saving power so that others in seeing it may as well be drawn to salvation." God saves. In saving He totally transforms sinners into saints. He produces in them good works, righteous living, so that others in seeing the transformation may be attracted to the very same salvation.

Now in chapter 2, verses 1 to 10, we've already looked over the very specific things regarding godly behavior that demonstrates God's saving power. In fact, in all the categories of age groups, and including those who are slaves or bondslaves or employees, but coming to verses 11 to 14, as we noted last week, we now come to the foundation, the doctrinal foundation for this righteous behavior. Righteous behavior is called for and it should be expected because of God's saving work. Let's look at those verses again; follow from verse 11.

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men." Now follow this: God saved, verse 12, and in it "instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed, and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." And that's the culmination. We were saved to be zealous for good deeds so that a life of true righteousness and true goodness may draw attention to the saving power of God so that other sinners may come, believe, and be saved. The theme here is saving grace. And the purpose of saving grace, as far as time is concerned, is to produce a regenerated people who will then be witness and evidence to God's saving power. And we've made that point repeatedly.

Now as we analyze saving grace in verses 11 to 14, we can find it best understood by splitting it into four aspects. Saving grace has four components or four features or four aspects that unfold in this text. First of all, saving grace is designed to deliver us from the penalty of sin, verse 11, the penalty of sin. "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men." Now where I get the penalty of sin out of that verse is the word "salvation." "Salvation" means "to rescue, to save." It can even be used to heal from some disease, debilitating and even deadly. Salvation is a deliverance. It is a rescue operation, and it presupposes that there is imminent danger and death. And so we find inherent in the word "salvation," then, the concept that God wants to deliver us from the penalty of sin, to rescue us from death, to rescue us from hell.

Now remember he said, "The grace of God has appeared," and I told you the grace of God is not so much an attribute as a person. Here we find the grace of God really refers to Christ in His incarnation. Down in chapter 3, verse 4, we noted "when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us." The kindness of God, the love of God, and the grace of God appeared in the incarnate Christ who saved us. That's the essence of this. The term "appeared" has to do with some historical event, and there was an historical event - the great incarnation of Christ in which the grace of God appeared. And we went over that last time. It all began at Bethlehem. Sovereign grace came to save those who were lost. His name was to be Jesus "for He shall save His people from their sins." He came "to seek and to save that which was lost," to bring salvation which would deliver men and women from the fearsome and eternal penalty of sin.

And then we noted also the extent of His salvation is mentioned at the end of verse 11, "to all men." Or as I noted, "for all men." Now it's important for me to go back to this issue; the things I said last week were very important to be said. I got a lot of questions after the message about what I said, and I want to be sure you are clear on it, so I'll be a little bit more comprehensive in ways that time didn't permit for me to be last week.

Now when we talk about the fact that God is bringing through the incarnation of Jesus Christ saving grace, and that saving grace is going to produce salvation, and it's going to be brought to all men, the question comes, What do we mean by all men? Some people, who we call universalists, would say that's a guilt-edged guarantee that everybody is going to be saved. Others would say, "No, that is not an indication that everyone is going to be saved; it isn't even an indication that God has provided a salvation for everyone." They would take a very narrow view that Jesus died only for a few, that is, those who are saved, those who are chosen by God in eternity past. How are we to understand it when it says He is bringing salvation for all men?

Well, let me see if I can take you through a process so that any question that might still be remaining in your mind is eliminated. Before I do that, first let me say this. Last week I wanted to make a very strong point out of the fact that as far as you were concerned, as far as the human level is concerned, the only issue is faith. And that point I endeavored to make as clearly as I could last week. It is not your concern - and I speak of you in the sense of an unregenerate individual, a person who is not saved - to try to figure out in God's decree how far the atonement extends, any more than it is the unregenerate sinner's problem to try to figure out who got elected. The only issue confronting an unregenerate individual is the issue of faith. And Jesus said, "If you believe, you are saved, and if you do not believe, you are damned." From the standpoint of the sinner, the atonement extends to him by virtue of faith, is closed out to him by virtue of unbelief. "You will die in your sins because you do not believe in Me."

Now that couldn't be more clear - and particularly in the gospel of John. If you start reading at chapter 3 and just keep reading, you will find no mention in terms of giving an evangelistic message to unbelievers, no mention of any eternal, elective purpose, no mention of any ultimate decree of God as the deciding factor in terms of a man on the earth as he looks at salvation. It is not his job to discover whether he's chosen. It is a matter of faith; it is a matter of belief.

Now that's not the whole story, but that's an important component and an important emphasis, even in John 6 where Jesus says, "All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me." He also says, "Whoever comes to Me I won't cast out." There's also a "whoever" there. So in the gospel of John particularly, which is, of course, the most evangelistic of all the gospels, written that "we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and believing might have life in His name." There is the constant cry for faith. And what we say to a sinner is what all the apostles said to the sinners and what Jesus said to the sinners, and that is, "Believe, believe, believe." And in believing is all the essence of what that believing means, including repentance, turning from sin, and obedient submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. So looking at it from the sinner's side, and I wanted to emphasize that because very often in a discussion of the extent of reconciliation, or the extent of atonement, or the extent of Christ's expiation, propitiation, or sacrifice, we get caught up in a debate about whether it is limited or unlimited from the decree of God's side - and we'll talk about that in a moment. But from the human side it is a matter of faith. And I hope you understand that. God is a saving God, "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

Now to show you the unlimited sense in which the Scripture speaks of Christ's provision, I want you to listen to some very, very straightforward and explicit texts. First of all, I want to draw one from the gospel of John, and I want to take you to chapter 3 for a moment because I want you to understand this, a very important understanding. And I want to read a familiar verse and familiar section, John 3, I want to start at verse 14, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of

Man be lifted up." Verse 15, "That whoever believes may in Him have eternal life." Again you have this "whoever believes." Verse 13 - verse 15, rather - making a very simple statement. Then verse 16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Then verse 17, "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Now there you are again. God loves the world; God sends Christ into the world to die for the world that the world should be saved through Him, and those who believe will be saved. Scripture is abundantly clear in the call to sinners that it is a matter of faith. You don't have to discover whether the atonement - there's a list somewhere of who the atonement applied to or who the elect are; it is a matter of faith. In the sixth chapter of John, and verse 51, we read this: "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh." There is an extent in which the grace of God in Christ reaches the world.

And then perhaps a more dramatic statement, John 1:29. "The next day he saw Jesus" - that's John the Baptist - "coming to him and he said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away' - What? - 'the sin of the world!'" Now John knows what he means by "world." When it says, "God so loves the world, He takes away the sin of the world," it's a very comprehensive statement.

Look at 2 Corinthians chapter 5. Or you can listen to it. Verse 19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." And then at the end of verse 19, "Therefore He's committed to us the word of reconciliation" - "us" being the redeemed - "we are," verse 20, "the ambassadors for Christ." We go out into the world begging people to be reconciled. Again I say, it is not a question of finding out who is elected, or for whom the atonement was made. It is a matter of knowing that Christ died for all, and we are called to go to all and call them to faith.

Look at 1 Timothy chapter 2. First Timothy chapter 2, verse 5 and 6, and you're going to stay with me on this - a very important message to clear up any misunderstanding in your mind as you evangelize. First Timothy 2:5, "There is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all." "A ransom for all" - that is a very unqualified statement. There is no caveat; there is no exception; that's simply what it says.

And then in 1 John 2:2, one of the scriptures we noted last time, "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." Now if you just go through and read those verses, you're going to conclude that Christ died for the world. You couldn't conclude anything else.

Look at 1 Timothy 4:10, 1 Timothy 4:10. At the end of the verse, using again the emphasis as is often in the pastorals that God is a Savior, he says, "The living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers." Hmm, now we've got a qualifier here. He is "the Savior of all men, especially of believers." In that little, that little adverb *malista* that is translated "especially" is very important. It demands that - follow this - that all men enjoy to some degree the saving that believers enjoy. In some way all men enjoy the saving that believers enjoy. That's what's demanded by the use of that little word *malista*.

So we ask the question, then, God has sent Christ to be a Savior. The extent of that, as we have been reading in many scriptures, seems to be unlimited or undefined, at least. Here it says He is "the Savior of all men," and then qualifies it by saying "especially of believers." So in one sense He is the Savior of all men. And in another sense, somewhat related, He is especially the Savior of believers. What does this mean? Well let me see if I can give it to you in the words of R.L. Dabney in his book entitled *The Five Points of Calvinism*. This is what he wrote. "Christ's sacrifice has certainly purchased for the whole human race a merciful postponement of the doom incurred by our sins, including all the temporal blessings of our earthly life, all the gospel restraints on human depravity, and the sincere offer of heaven to everyone. For, but for Christ, man's doom would have followed instantly after his sin, as that of the fallen angels did." It's a very articulate paragraph.

What he is saying is this: that the Lord in His death did in fact purchase for the whole human race a kind of salvation or deliverance. And what was it? The fact that they're not consumed instantaneously upon their first iniquity. All the temporal blessings of the gospel, what 1 Corinthians talks about, if you happen to be a non-believer married to a believer, and you are in some sense sanctified by the very presence of a believer in your life, the rain that falls on the just and the unjust, the restraining power of the Holy Spirit in the world that restrains sin from being as bad as it can be so human life isn't as bad as it could be. And then the sincere offer of heaven to all. You see, in the death of Christ man is put into a different situation than angels. There was no expiation for them. They sinned and they were damned at the split second they sinned, and they were out of God's presence in terms of participating in His holiness forever and ever and ever.

So there is a sense in which the saving work of Christ has purchased deliverance from judgment for all. This would be a parallel, for example, to the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament, where on the Day of Atonement a sacrifice was made - Yom Kippur - that basically covered the nation. It expiated the sins of the nation in the sense that God forgave their sins as a nation and set aside His judgment. It did not guarantee individual and personal salvation for all. That was a matter of faith and election. We'll say more about that in a moment. But it did cover them and delay God's judgment. And I believe that in the sense that 1 Timothy 4 is writing, the death of Jesus Christ was a gracious, merciful act on His part, which in its benefits extends to the whole world and gives them blessing upon blessing. The negative aspect: they are not destroyed instantaneously upon their first iniquity, which God would have every right to do. Furthermore, they receive abundant temporal blessing upon blessing upon blessing. And within that, they have time and opportunity to repent.

God delivers the unregenerate from death. He didn't do that for angels. There was no provision for them. So in the present tense - look at this - God is a Savior not a judge. He is not seen in general as the executioner. He is demonstrating that He is a saving God. And every unbeliever ought to look at his own life and say, "I have seen a small evidence of God's saving grace because I breathe, because I live, because I love, because I laugh, because I see, I hear, and there is beauty. And I know now that God is a saving God who longs to save or He would have snuffed my life out and had every right to do it."

God was Savior of the whole Jewish nation when He delivered them out of Egypt. And yet, it says in 1 Corinthians 10:5, commenting on that, "Though He saved the whole nation, He was not well pleased with most of them. But He gave them opportunity to repent." God saves all men in a temporal sense, generally. He saves believers especially - not just in a temporal sense, but in a spiritual sense and an eternal sense. So listen, when somebody says that the expiating work of

Christ, the sacrifice of Christ, does not extend to the world - that's too limited a view. It does if nothing more than in a temporal sense and in the opportunity to see God's saving power in the very fact that they live and breathe and are given opportunity to accept the light of His knowledge made available to them.

All of this temporal kind of deliverance should lead people to see God's mercy and saving nature and come to faith. And that is exactly what the apostle Paul says in Romans chapter 2. Listen to Romans chapter 2, verse 1, "Therefore you are without excuse." "You are without excuse," he says, "Every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?" Then listen to verse 4, "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to" - What? - "repentance?"

God's temporal kindness, mercy, patience, forbearance is leading people to repentance. But instead of repenting, he says "your stubborn and unrepentant heart is storing up wrath for you in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." The point is that every sinner in the world knows he's a sinner. And I believe built into that is guilt and fear that there is a judge. But at the same time, any sinner with any thinking is going to say, "But I'm still alive. Therefore God is a patient and tolerant and forgiving God." Now and then every sinner sees enough demonstrations of God punctuating human life with His judgment to maintain the fear. I mean, you take the homosexual community that has AIDS. They've got to conclude, one, if they think seriously, that there is a law into this universe that if violated will destroy you, and they've got to be smart enough if they think about it and rational enough if they can still use their rational mind to conclude that somehow we have violated something. And at the same time they've got to say to themselves - though it means death, it takes years for it to come - what kind of God has a holy standard and at the same time is mercifully patient and gives us kindness, forbearance that leads us to repentance?

Sinners generally enjoy, then, the saving power of God in a limited way. But that limited way in which the sinner enjoys it is unlimited in the sense that it's given to every sinner who lives in the temporal blessing of God. So there's a sense in which God loves the world and shows His salvation to the world and provides a sacrifice that is sufficient for the world and even demonstrates to all of them His saving grace and mercy and gives them opportunity to believe. Looking at it like that we know, as I said last time, that the thing that demonstrates the extent of reconciliation or the extent of atonement is faith. If enjoying the temporal, saving demonstration of God I come to Him for spiritual salvation, I put my faith in Him, at that moment that unlimited, saving power becomes mine personally.

Look at John 15. In John 15 - we may never get back to Titus, but this is really great - in John 15, verse 13, Jesus said, "Greater love hath no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you." There it is. What does He command? "Believe and you shall be saved. Repent, follow Me; obey. If you do that, you're My friends. I lay down My life for My friends. Who are My friends? The people who come to Me and believe in Me."

And then in verse 16 He flips it over and He says, "By the way, you didn't choose Me, I chose you." And there comes the paradox again, right? It's a matter of faith; it's also a matter of divine choice; and we'll see more of that in a moment.

Look at Romans chapter 3, verse 26, "He is the just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." The one who obeys the command to repent, believe, follow, submit - the one who has faith. First John 1:9, "If we are the ones confessing our sins, then He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." The one who believes, who repents, who follows, who has faith, who confesses, that's the one who enters into reconciliation with God - "Whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

Now something more specific for a moment. The word *atonement* is often used, I think, in a sense that perhaps isn't as accurate, biblically, as it could be. The word *atonement*, for example in the Old Testament, is not specific. The Day of Atonement does not actually mean in itself a *saving* atonement. When the sins of the nation were atoned for on the Yom Kippur that does not mean that everybody in the nation was saved. So it is used in a more general sense. There was a provision made to make the nation one with God - that's what *atonement*, at-one-ment, means. But it was a very general term.

Now, when you come to the New Testament it is only used one time, and that is in Romans 5:11, and it means "reconciliation." It's only used once, and it means "reconciliation." It's translated that way properly in the New American Standard. Now listen to this, in that sense there are many atonements in the sense that every time someone believes they are made one with God. Every reconciliation is individual, particular, and limited to the sinner who believes. So you have in a large sense God's saving power demonstrated in an unlimited way to all of humanity in temporal evidence that He is a saving God, which also gives them opportunity to believe. Then you have the reality that atonement is actually, actually becomes a spiritual reality upon the moment of faith when the sinner is reconciled to God. Atonement is reconciliation. It is to be at one with God, to have sin dealt with so that the relationship is made whole.

Again, quoting from R.L. Dabney in his book *Five Points of Calvinism*, he says, "There are as many atonements as there are true believers in heaven and earth, each one individual." The word means "to be reconciled." There are as many reconciliations as there are people being reconciled to God. Faith, then, from the human vantage point activates reconciliation, or it activates atonement. Reconciliations are many; atonements are particular and individual.

Let's take the word *expiation* or *satisfaction*. That word, there's only one of those. There are many reconciliations, every sinner coming to God. There's only one expiation, the old word, one perfect, glorious, sufficient, unlimited act of God in Christ by which Jesus Christ bore the wrath of God for sin. And again from Dabney, he writes, "But sacrifice, or expiation, is one - the single, glorious, indivisible act of the divine Redeemer, infinite and inexhaustible in merit. Had there been but one sinner elected of God, this whole divine sacrifice would have been needed to expiate his guilt. Had every sinner of Adam's race been elected, the same one sacrifice would have been sufficient for all. We must absolutely get rid," he says, "of the mistake that expiation is an aggregate of gifts to be divided and distributed out; one piece to each receiver like pieces of money out of a bag to a multitude of paupers. Christ's expiation, because it is a divine act, is indivisible and exhaustible and sufficient in itself to cover the guilt of all the sins that will ever be committed on earth," end quote.

So His sacrifice is unlimited. John Calvin saw that when he wrote in his commentary on 1 John 2:2 that the provision of Christ on the cross was sufficient for all - sufficient for all. There is unlimited expiation, limited application. And the application limited to those who believe.

Now, stay with me. Here comes the key as we move down the line here. The question is, Who will believe? Who will believe? The answer, Not everybody. As Paul said in 2 Thessalonians, I quoted you last week, "Not all have faith." Not everybody is going to believe. So in that sense this unlimited expiation, this opportunity for many, many reconciliations is limited to those who believe and not everybody will believe. So when Scripture talks about - listen now - when Scripture talks about the atonement, or it talks about the death of Christ, it not, it does not always say "the world." There is a sense, and I've tried to show you that, in which His sacrifice extends to the world, but Scripture also refers not to the world but says Jesus died for the many. And now it kind of narrows down.

Isaiah 53:11 says that Jesus justified the many, "as He will bear their iniquities." It says He bore the sins of many. So now there are some scriptures that are starting to limit this thing. Matthew 20:28 - listen to this - "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for *many*." In Matthew chapter 26, and verse 28: "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for *many*." Hebrews 9:28, the same thing, "many." And Scripture is telling us then that the atonement, the sacrifice, will never ultimately reach everybody, but many - or some.

Now the question comes, Who are the many? We're narrowing it down yet. Who are the many? Answer - the elect, the elect. The elect are the ones who will believe because they've been chosen before the foundation of the world to believe, and because God in His mercy grants to them saving grace and saving faith. As Ephesians 2:8 and 9 says, "They're saved by grace through faith; and that is not of themselves, it is the gift of God."

And so, as you come down to the next step in this funneling down, Christ died only in that sense for the elect. There's a sense in which He died for the world. His atonement was for the many. The many are those who believe. Those who believe are those who were chosen to believe. And therefore, in that sense, His death will only be, though sufficient for the whole world, efficient and effective to those who are elect. Verse 14 of our text, He gave Himself, not for the world and not for the many, but for *us* that He might "redeem *us*," that He might "purify for Himself a people for His own possession." Now it's gone from the world, to many, to us. That's why Isaiah 53:8 says, same text, "He died for the transgression of My people," says God. "My people."

Now with that in mind, go to John 10, and we're going to wrap this up - go to John 10. Now I want you to notice verse 11, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life," not for the world, not for the many, but "for" - Who? - "the sheep." The sheep. Verse 15, "Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life" - not for the world, not for the many - but "for the sheep." Verse 26, "You do not believe because you're not My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, I know them, they follow Me; I give eternal life to them...they shall never perish."

So, you see, the Bible also says that Christ died just for the sheep, just for the sheep. Look at John 17; this is really remarkable. John 17:9, Jesus is praying here, and He's praying for specific people: verse 9, "I ask on their behalf" - that is, the ones the Father has given Me - "I do not ask on behalf of the world" - I'm not praying for the world, He said - "but of those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine." Hmmm, Jesus says, "I'm not interceding for the world, I'm interceding for the ones You've chosen to give Me.

Down to verse 19, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask," verse 20, "in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word." Not just the apostles, but all who will believe. Jesus says, "I'm not praying for the world;

I'm praying for the ones You give to Me, namely, the apostles and all who will believe their word." Very narrow. He's a high priest. He intercedes just as He did there now, but He doesn't intercede for everybody. If He interceded for everybody, everybody'd get saved. He intercedes for those that the Father has given to Him.

Look at Ephesians chapter 5 - a familiar verse but perhaps not familiar in this context. Verse 25 of Ephesians 5, we hear this read at marriages; we've studied it here many times. "Husbands, love your wives" - listen to this - "just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for *her*." He died for the sheep. He prays for the ones the Father has chosen. He gave His life for the *church* - not for the world here but for the *church*.

You see, this thing just keeps narrowing down. So you can go to the Scripture and you can see where there is indication that God loved the world, and He died to reconcile the world, and He paid the ransom for all. And there is an extent to which salvation extends to the whole world - certainly in a temporal sense in terms of blessing, as we pointed out, in the withholding of ultimate judgment, in giving them the space to repent and believe. But there is also those, there are also those verses that say He died for the many. We ask, Who are the many? The many are those who believe. Who believes? They are the elect, the one the Father has given to Him - namely the church, the church predetermined in eternity past. It is in that sense that we must understand the sacrifice of Christ.

The mystery in all of this is, Why did God choose some and not the rest? The answer, I don't know. What's even a deeper mystery to me than that is, Why did God - not Why did God choose some and not others? That's not as big a mystery, because I could understand if He didn't choose anybody. What is a bigger mystery to me is, How can people be damned to eternal hell for unbelief if they weren't chosen? How can it be their responsibility? That is an unresolvable difficulty, and that has to be resolved in the mind of God. But men go to hell because they don't believe. They go to heaven because they do, from the human viewpoint. How God harmonizes that with His purposes in election is His problem and not mine - for which I am grateful. All I know is I can say to every sinner, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved."

The point in our text, then, is to show - back to Titus now; we'll at least start and end there - that God saves, God saves. He longs to save, and He came to save us from the deadly penalty of sin and then to transform our lives so that we would live saved lives. And living saved lives we would lead others to our saving God.

I can't understand all these things in the infinite mind of God. I know there's a sense in which He died for the world, and I know that that gives men an opportunity to see His saving power in a temporal way and an opportunity to believe, if they will. And if they won't, they'll be damned. But I also know not all will believe. There will be many who will believe, relative many. That doesn't mean most. It doesn't mean more than half, because it's still going to be few that find it. But they are many in terms of the sheer number through all of human history. But the many will be those who were chosen before the foundation of the world and given the power, the faith, the grace to believe.

That great mystery is not unlike the other mystery. If you want another mystery, I'll give you this simple one. I can't even understand the new birth itself. I can't even comprehend how a person goes from darkness to light, death to life, hell to heaven. I can't even understand what happens inside the life of an individual who is saved. It's incomprehensible. There are many incomprehensibilities to me in Scripture. I'll say this: I warn every sinner, "If you perish in your sin it's your fault." And I say to

every saint, "If you're saved, give all the glory to God."

Father, we thank You for our time this morning. And these are such great, rich and profound truths. We can only hope that in some way we have touched on the things that would be representative of what Your Spirit would want us to know. Lord, Jesus said it so often, "You will die in your sins because you don't believe, and whosoever believes will be saved." We do the best we can at understanding Your plan, and we're left with some deep questions. But there's no question that needs to remain when we look at it from our vantage point. If we repent, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, confess Him, follow Him in obedience, we will be made one with You, we will be reconciled. And that faith comes by hearing the message of Christ.

We pray, O God, that anyone here who has not believed, having heard again this morning of Christ's death, will come in faith to believe in the One who died and rose again and thus be saved and have their sins then set aside and be fully reconciled to God. Ours is not to comprehend Your infinite mind but to obey Your command to repent, believe. And then, Lord, for those of us who do, help us to live saved lives that attract others that we might be the very instruments by which You save Your people. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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