

(Titus - Part 22): The Christian's Three Dimensional Life

by A.W. Tozer

The Christian's three-dimensional life consists of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, which are taught by the grace of God to bring us salvation.

Duration: 28:55

Scripture: Matthew 5:29

Topics: "Titus"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of preaching the word of God and staying true to sound doctrine. He highlights the influence of righteous and godly men in the founding of the United States. The preacher encourages the audience to renounce their chains and embrace the limitless liberty and shining light of God. He concludes by mentioning that in the next sermon, he will discuss the Second Coming of Christ.

Transcript

Now we've been talking about grace from the book of Titus, grace of God to bring us 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. Grace divine, how sweet the sound, sweet the grace that I have found, wrote one old brother. Another one said, sweet the sound of grace divine, sweet the grace that makes me thine.

Grace is a charming sound, harmonious to the ear, said another one. Now that's the grace of God, and I have been talking about it these Sunday mornings and have said that if the grace of God has reached you, it has taught you also by inward impulse. And the first thing that it teaches is denial.

That is, it teaches to disavow, renounce, repudiate. And there are two things mentioned here that are to be renounced, ungodliness and worldly lusts. Ungodliness means, of course, impiety, irreverence, and whatever is not of God, whatever God is not in.

Whatever God is not in is ungodly by definition. Un being a negative of God, godly. Now, the dictates of grace teach us that whatever is ungodly, whatever is ungodly is forthwith to be renounced.

Impiety, irreverence, forthwith to be renounced. And it is to be renounced even if accepted, say, at school. We spend an awful lot of our time in the hands of pagans, an awful lot of time.

We start in the preschool classes with finger painting. And we end up with a Ph.D. taken in some university where the name of God is about as welcome as the name of Hitler would have been in the Jewish synagogue. And the schools place their approval tacitly or overtly on lots of things that are still not of God.

God isn't in them. They're ungodly. Either we're not to be Christians, or else we are to renounce these ungodly things even if for upwards of 20 years we have been taught that they're all right in the schools.

We are to renounce them even if they are set to music, on TV or radio, and many of things are set to music on TV and radio that are irreverent, ungodly, godless. But God isn't in them. And the fact that they are set to music or illustrated doesn't make them good.

The Christian's got to have backbone. And if you know there's one kind of person that will never get to heaven, and that is the one without a backbone. The fellow that has no backbone will never make it through, because it takes a certain amount of backbone to deny when everybody else is affirming and to affirm when everybody else is denying.

Anybody that thinks a Christian is a weakling, he's never been a Christian. He's never been much around Christians. Any dead fish or dying fish can turn over on his back, float belly up with the stream.

But a salmon goes up the Columbia River over falls high as this building. And the Christian, the grace of God, and the word of God unite to teach us that we are to deny ungodliness and renounce it for good, even if it is practiced by celebrities. The saints and prophets of the day are the celebrities.

And some celebrities practice things that are ungodly. And the fact that they are practiced by widely known people doesn't in any wise mitigate the ungodliness. They're still ungodly, denying ungodliness.

And all ungodliness is to be denied by the Christian, even if it is found in classic literature. The fact that Boccaccio or somebody else wrote it doesn't make it good, doesn't make it godly. It's still dirty if it's dirty and it's still ungodly if it's ungodly.

And it isn't better because it's found embalmed in classic art. Go to the Art Institute and you'll find some things God isn't in. And every Christian's to have backbone enough to be sneered at for repudiating such things.

And even if they're approved by our friends, good kind friends who love us, and even if they're practiced by church people, they're still wrong. And even if they're defended by priests or pastors, and outside of murder and adultery, I don't suppose there's any sin anywhere that some priest or pastor won't come out in favor of. Shakespeare said the devil could always quote a text for a purpose.

He must have gone to church sometimes anyhow, or been among religious people. Now, if this sounds severe, what I'm saying to you, my friends, remember what Jesus said. If thy hand offend thee, cut it off.

If thine eye offend thee or cause thee to stumble, pluck it out. For it's better to go to heaven with only one eye and one hand than to go to hell having two of each. And if you just turn back a page here, 2 Timothy, Paul says, I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and

the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering in doctrine.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned down to fables. Watch thou on all things.

Endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. And then the second is worldly lusts. Of course, the old word lust in English, and I've looked it up in Hebrew and Greek, and it means about the same thing.

It is the word, the original word, which was translated lusts, means desires, pleasure longings, pleasure longings, longings for pleasure. Now these are identified elsewhere in the New Testament by modifiers. I have gone over the New Testament to find them, and there's a modifier called foolish, foolish lusts, another one called hurtful lusts, fleshly lusts, ungodly lusts, former lusts in your ignorance, youthful lusts, and lusts that warn you members.

Now these are here, and they're natural to fallen man, perfectly natural to fallen man, that he should have foolish, hurtful lusts, fleshly, ungodly lusts. And of course, because they're natural, they're defended. Defended and excused by the psychologists and the sociologists and the modern writers and the marriage counselors and consultants.

But the Christian doesn't ask advice about them, he renounces them, because he's taught both inwardly and on the pages of the book. He's taught on the pages of the book to renounce worldly lusts, and he's taught by the spirit in his heart to renounce worldly lusts. And so when he picks up a book excusing worldly lusts, he shuts it up and turns it away from it, because he's taught inwardly and by the book of God.

Now, God doesn't leave us there. He says we're to deny, and I've borne down heavily upon that, but he doesn't leave us there. God never calls us to dwell in a vacuum, and he never calls us to sterile negativity, negativeness, nothingness, not doing things, not being ungodly, not being lustful, not being unbelieving.

He calls us away from those things to something else. He doesn't leave us in the vacuum. He calls us out that he might bring us in.

And so the indwelling spirit and the Word agree that we should live. There's your positive word. Deny, there's your negative word.

Live, there's your positive word. And just as this electric light has a negative and a positive pole, and if it doesn't have both, we have no light, just as this recorder must have that has both negative and positive. And if you don't have the two, you don't have a recorder.

So the Word of God teaches us that there should be held in suspension the two. We must say no and yes. No to the ungodly, yes to the godly.

Perhaps somebody could get me a glass of water. I got a little laryngitis last Tuesday night. I haven't been able to get free from it.

I'm not sick, and I'm not discouraged. I'm just hindered. Now how shall we live? I remember hearing Churchill one time during a war make a speech and he coughed all the way through it.

I remember that and it gives me a little consolation to know that the great winning. Thank you, my friend. I don't know that cures what I have, but it may help.

I never like to drink water while I preach, because it makes me self-conscious. I always remember a story about the windmill that ran on water. Now how should we live? How should we live? Well, thank God, live, live, live.

Get that word, live, live. There's a good positive word. Live.

We should live. Couldn't live before because we were dead. Now we can live.

Well, we shall live soberly, righteously, and godly, and in this present world. Here we have, and I'll be brief with it, the Christian's three-dimensional life. These are sobriety, righteousness, and godliness.

There are your three dimensions for the Christian. Sobriety, which means temperance and self-control, this is the self dimension and has to do with our relation to ourselves. A man who can't control himself, you're not going to make much of a Christian.

Sobriety, self-control, temperance, self-mastery, this is the self dimension. This is Christianity as relates to me. Then there's righteousness, which means justice, honesty, loving-kindness.

That's the other's dimension, or it's Christianity as it relates to others through us. Then there's godliness, and this is the God dimension, our relation to God, faith, reverence, and love. And on those three dimensions, men live.

Christians live if they deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. But if they do not deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, then they're all confused and mixed up. If they do not deny ungodliness, they can join a church, but they can't have godliness.

And if they do not deny worldly lusts, they may join the church, but not have sobriety, or temperance, or self-control. And if they do not have godliness and sobriety, how are they going to have righteousness? So we find ourselves dwelling there in this triangle, or these three dimensions. Sobriety, that's self-control.

We're not much of a people for self-control now. They believed in it once, sober, serious people. And now, an un-sober, uncontrolled, lawless generation is writing books about those serious-minded, self-controlled, disciplined men who lived their Christianity like a soldier.

They're writing now, I Remember Papa, One Foot in Heaven, Chicken Every Sunday, How I Got On with Grandpa, the young smart alecks of the day, who are living in Sodom, in lusts and sinful self-indulgence, now write serial comic books about the old Puritans and the men of God who said, let's do right if the heavens fall. And they show some of their extreme and radical beliefs. They had radical beliefs, I suppose.

Lot was a radical in Sodom, and Noah was a radical before the flood. Daniel was a radical in Babylon. Luther was a radical in Germany.

John Wesley was a radical in a rotten society in England. Maybe they were radical, but they were sober men who were full of the Spirit and who controlled themselves. Incidentally, that book of Proverbs, I don't

want to steal any of the thunder of the brother who will be giving a series on the book of Proverbs to the young people, but that book of Proverbs deals with that kind of life.

It's a grave life. Life to the book of Proverbs is a serious thing. There's no yak yakking and no empty laughing.

In fact, it calls laughter, the laughter of fools, it says, is like the crackling of thorns under a pot. You ever take dry thorns and light them and put them under a pot to try to cook an egg? Notice how they crackle and pop in all directions and then die down. The old man of God said that's the way of the laughter of fools.

Well, sobriety, that's self-control, you know, the Holy Ghost is in you and you're living right. That's your self-dimension. Then there's righteousness, your attitude toward others.

The Spirit teaches us both in the word and in the heart that we're to live righteously toward others. Don't cheat others, don't rob others, don't lie about others, don't gossip about others to their harm. And then there's godliness, faith, I say, and reverence and love.

That comes first, our attitude toward God's first, but it's put third here because it starts with self and goes up. I am last, my neighbor is next and God is first. God is first, my neighbor's next and I am last.

That's the way it's supposed to be in the Christian life. Somebody said, what a cold and colorless life we'd live to be sober and righteous and godly. That's just where you're mistaken, my friend.

That man who fell out with his wife here yesterday or day before yesterday went to get her. She wouldn't come back, he drew a gun, she started to run, he started to fire. And he hit her a few times, I guess, didn't kill her, and then turned around and blew whatever that was he had in his head out.

It wasn't brains because his brains were cooked, steaming with with fury. They want me to believe that that is superior to the self-controlled, righteous, God-fearing man who lives his holy life so he dares to die. They want me to believe that bunch of shapely mares out in Hollywood who neigh over the fence, the shapely stallions out in Hollywood, they want me to believe that they are superior to those serious-minded fathers of whom we now make fun and about whom comic books are written, who walked with God and were not, for God took them.

If you want to get your faith up and get your heart helped, go to Plymouth where our fathers landed and read the tombstones. Go on up on the hill and read the tombstones. That's all I want you to do.

That's enough for a day. That's Bible enough for a day. You get more text there than you get in the University of Chicago.

Right there on the hill, men of God lived there. They had their good old bishop's Bible along with them and said the King James was modernistic. But they carried their King, their Geneva Bible along with them.

They read it. Righteous man, sober man, godly man. Don't forget, my brethren, that their states were founded mostly by sober men, godly men.

A nation was whittled out. This is close to the Fourth of July. I can wax patriotic and say this nation was whittled out by men who held God in reverence and held their neighbor in loving affection and held themselves in control.

The other kind went along for the ride. But the nation was founded by the other kind, this kind, the sober, the righteous, the godly. And our hospitals were founded mostly by that kind of people.

The very word hospital comes up out of religious context. When they marched from Europe at the preaching of Peter the Hermit and marched for Jerusalem and went in there, they built hospitals and called some hospitalers. And almost every alleviation of human suffering and woe that's known in modern society has sprung up out of the Christian ethic.

Sober, the righteous, the godly people. When the human heart goes free and the human brain runs away, and we have atom bombs, hydrogen bombs, death rays, bacteriological warfare, destruction of cities. No, my friend, the Holy Ghost isn't calling you to negativity.

The Lord is calling you to live. Hear that word, live. But live soberly and live righteously.

And the word righteous, always remember, is not a negative word. It's an explosive, dynamic, positive word. The man who determines to live righteously in this unrighteous world is going to have a full-time job on his hands.

Say nothing to do, you live righteously in an unrighteous world and you'll have something to do. So I call you to renounce. Renounce what? Renounce your prison and take all of God's great out of doors.

But until you've renounced your prison, you'll never go free. Renounce your chains, take all the infinite, limitless liberty of God. And renounce your darkness and take all the shining light of God that shineth more and more unto a perfect day.

Sweet the sound of grace divine, sweet the grace that makes me thine. And that's what the grace of God teaches. It teaches where to be good people, loving people, generous, kindly people, God-fearing people, self-controlled people, with temperance and sobriety as a part of our natures.

But at the same time, I have all the freedom of God's vast out of doors, and all the liberty of the sons of God. And all the shining light, the light of the world pours on us. Amen.

Now next week, I want to talk about the second coming of Christ, looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing. That'll be next Sunday morning, the Lord willing, at the morning hour.

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