

# Grace and Glory

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of having Christ as our motive and guide in life, and living according to His principles in order to be conformed to His image and to be with Him in glory.*

**Scripture:** Titus 2:11

**Topics:** "Christian Living", "Grace"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes that the true motive for a Christian's actions should be Christ, which transforms even mundane tasks into acts of worship. He explains that while we navigate a world contrary to God, we are guided by Christ, who leads us on a divine path. Darby highlights the importance of understanding our lost state and the grace of God that saves us, urging believers to live in anticipation of Christ's return and the glory that awaits. He encourages Christians to recognize their identity in Christ and to let His love be the driving force behind their lives. Ultimately, Darby calls for a deep, personal relationship with Christ, who desires to bring us into His glory.

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## Transcript

Even in the common things of life, the motives that govern us are what give character to the things we do. The apostle turns at once to the motive, which is Christ; and the moment he touches that spring ("that they may adorn the doctrine of God, our Saviour, in all things"), all wakes up in his soul. That is the motive; and then he goes on with the whole history of Christianity till Christ's coming again.

It is a blessed thing in our common every-day life, that we can get Christ as our motive. If a man is fond of money or pleasure, it is the motive he has; that is what he is. If he is full of Christ, that is what he is. You may get two men doing exactly the same thing, only with different motives. With the Christian, Christ is his only motive, or ought to be. There may be a thousand things he has to do, common duties of life, but he can serve Christ in them, and there I get a motive powerful enough. Perhaps you have a froward master; well, you can glorify Christ in that. It is everything that the Christian should understand that he has no motive but Christ; many a thing to do, but no other motive but this. The common things of life do not unspiritualise a person; I must attend to them, and do them properly; but if my motive in doing them is Christ, it is a mistake to think that they hinder my soul in spirituality. Supposing I was making anything for Christ, do you think I should not make it as well as I possibly could? Well, then, we ought to do everything for Christ. It is every-day walk that characterises the Christian: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," because, if I cannot do it in His name, I ought not to do it at all. If I can do it

in His name, there is the motive.

To be guided, this is the thing: "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way." There is no way in this world. How did the Israelites get any way - the way which the vulture's eye hath not seen? Why, the cloud went before them. The fact that we have to find a way in which to walk, is a proof that we are all away from God. It is a world contrary to God, and I have to find my way. "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them." I get a way then, but it is a divine way, and I am following Christ in it. I get it by having Him going before me; and all I look for is the way here, because I am a pilgrim and a stranger. Christ has given Himself for our sins, to deliver us from this present evil world; but He has left me in it, and He has left me His own spiritual pathway on my way to rejoin Him up there. If I have a single eye, it will be a bright path; and Paul said, I count all dross and dung, that I may win Christ. If we have not made up our minds to follow Christ, then it is not an easy path. In following Christ, of course there are difficulties; but a man with one object, it has been remarked, always has energy.

"God our Saviour," is the particular character of God in the epistles to Timothy and Titus. It is the blessed name He has taken, that He is God our Saviour; it implies that we needed to be saved. Why did I need to be saved? Because I was lost: not only that I had done some wrong things, but that I was lost; and it is just in understanding that, that we get the full, blessed, clear apprehension that we are saved. I find that God has interfered, and done a work entirely His own; and the question then is, what is the value of that work? Well, I say, it is finished, and Christ is in glory in consequence.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Ver. 13.) Grace has appeared (ver. 11), teaching us to look for the appearing of the glory, and teaching us how to walk in this present world. There I get the Christian between these two points: the grace that brings salvation has appeared: but the glory has not. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." This appearing of grace teaches us how to walk, whilst we are waiting for the appearing of the glory. The Christian stands between the first coming of Christ (who revealed God the Father, and accomplished the work for our salvation) and His coming again, when He will take us into the full result in glory - we receive the Holy Ghost meanwhile. First, I get what this grace is, and what its character is. It has appeared - a full manifestation of it in the gospel. It is God's sovereign goodness to His people, when they were sinners, it is the love of God, when there was nothing loveable. "For a good man some would even dare to die: but God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." That is, for what is vile and hateful, I find God giving the best thing possible that heaven could give, and that is, His own Son. I get to know God; and it is a blessed thing to say I know God. If I believe in the coming of Christ, I ask, what put that into God's heart? It came from His heart, and that is the way I know God. "Who by him do believe in God - that your faith and hope might be in God." I know really what God is, in His unsought love; it is simply and entirely the spring of God's own heart that has done all this, and this is the grace of God. I know God, for I know His love. He is a judge, and a righteous and holy One, too; but, still, I get this blessed truth, that, when I was a mere sinner, I have got to the spring in this perfect love (in its nature sovereign above all evil), which has brought Christ into the world - that is what I have learned in the gospel. The gospel is that blessed truth, that He did not wait, and say, You behave yourselves, and then come up to me; but He came down into this world where we were. Oh what a blessed thought it is (though it may be humbling, too), that the Son of God has been down in this world in the midst of evil; it was nothing but love that brought Him, and that is how we begin to know God.

Then, I get what it brought me. Help to a man as he is? No - how can you help a man who is lost already? He came to sinners in their sins, and brought "salvation" to them, because they were lost.

Let us see what that character of "lost" is. There were the two things; I was guilty before God (not merely lost, though "lost" goes a great deal further), and besides that, there was the state I was in. "Guilty" refers to judgment; but when I say "I am lost," I speak of my present state. My carnal mind is enmity against God, so "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." I am "guilty" by reason of what I have done; but I am "lost" by reason of the state I am in. I am not in the earthly paradise in which Adam was, nor am I in the heavenly paradise where God is. Where am I? Totally away from God. It is not in the first moment of that awakening we learn the extent of this - that it is all over with me (not that God cannot take me out of that place). You must make the tree good, as well as its fruit. It is not merely that I have done wrong - the fruit - by which I am "guilty" - but the tree is bad. God is holy, and I am unholy; so I never can be with Him - though, of course, grace comes in - but that was our condition.

Christ came into the world, after men were sinners, and after they had broken the law, when it had been given them. He did not wait till the judgment. But men would not have Him, and proved more completely that "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Christ proved that a divine Person was in the world, for every power of evil fled before Him. He was there winning the confidence of men's hearts, but when He had shown all this, they crucified Him. You never see a person ashamed of a false religion: but the moment it is the true God, he is ashamed - even the disciples were ashamed to confess Christ. What a deal that tells of man's heart! God is light, as well as love, and that brought out things in their true light, and "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Christ has come in love - not to judge the world, but to save it - and however bad a person was shewn to be, if he cannot have confidence in a human being, he may have confidence in God. He came to win back the confidence of man's heart to God. He came to where man was. Take the cross as the expression of it all; there I get man's hatred, and God's love in His Son, in the same act. God is not covering over my sins, they are all shewn out in the light; and there I am in the presence of One who loves me perfectly, when they are all there - that is salvation. God is the spring of His own heart, and He deals with my state of sin, not hiding it from me: and He manifests that He has sent Christ for me. God has dealt with my sins already; He has not waited till the day of judgment. What did Christ die for, if it was not for our sins? Did not God deal with Him at the cross about them? And what has He done with them? He bore them in His own body on the tree. But has He got them now? No; they are all gone; and Christ is "sitting" now, because He has nothing to do. I am not speaking as to our walk now, because we need Him every moment, but as regards the work - it is all done. Seeing the Lord Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, shews me that God dealt with my sins when Christ bore them. The Person who is going to be the judge, is the One who has put away my sins. I have this blessed, true, infinite love, that did not even spare His own Son, and Christ took all my sins upon Himself and put them away. I am "in Christ" before God; not according to what I have done, but according to what Christ has done. I am not in my Adam-standing before God. Where are you then? I am in Christ. I have an entirely new place, condition, and standing before God. Just as Israel, not only had the blood on the door-posts, so that God did not touch them, but they were brought out of Egypt - brought to God: so we have been redeemed out of the condition in which we were in Adam, and brought to God: as it says in Romans 8, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

Verse 12 is grosser sins; by which the world ensnares us. I am to live "soberly" with regard to what is within myself; "righteously," because I have to do with other people; and "godly," because I have to do with God. I walk subduedly before God, instead of in my own will and lusts. Look at the standard given us - to "walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." But I must know God, or how can I walk worthy of Him? Are you going to commit sin with that which is a temple of the Holy Ghost? We are to walk worthy of God, because we are to manifest Christ. You are dear children; well then, go and walk like

your Father. It raises the standard, because it raises the motive. We get the standard of walk in association with these things.

Well, the Christian has salvation; and the Holy Ghost, who makes him know it; and he cries, "Abba, Father," for he knows he is a son of God, and thus he gets his place consciously, all founded on the unutterable love of God: Christ being his life, he reckons himself dead, as regards the flesh. There we have the past and present sins put away - all that the flesh produced, done with - and I am loved as Jesus is loved; "that the world may know that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." It is all flowing from this blessed unthought-of and unsought love of God.

Then, where is our future? It is not merely dying and going to Christ, but the heart is set upon Christ, and I am "looking" now "for that blessed hope." What blessed hope? Why, Christ Himself. Christ has become precious to me. He has loved me beyond all my thoughts - "to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." Ah, I say, I want Christ Himself, when shall I get Him? We are not "looking for" death, but it is a profitable thing to look it in the face, and see that it is pure gain. We belonged to death in the first Adam, and in the second Adam death belongs to us. For the Christian, the only thing that death is, is that he has done with temptation, sin, and sorrow, and he has begun with Christ; but death is not what we are looking for, for scripture says we are "predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son." The worth of what Christ has done, in putting away sins and glorifying God, is such, that it puts us into God's glory. Christ has entered as my forerunner - the witness that I am to be there too: "where I am, there shall also my servant be." When He comes, it will close this scene of grace that is going on now; therefore "He is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering." As long as He sees a soul to be gathered in, He does not come, but the promise is, I will come Myself. He is not content to send for us, but He must come Himself. "Our conversation is in heaven" - that is our present condition. We look to be with Him - and to be like Him too - but the best of all is to be with Him. The thing by which He comforts the hearts of the disciples is, that He was coming again to have them in the same glory as Himself - it is the first thing that will happen. It may be happier to die, and so wait in heaven; but whether we are there or here, we shall then altogether be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ. He has accomplished the work needed for it in His first coming in grace; and what He does now by the Holy Ghost, is to make us wait for Him, which is the original calling of the church of God. "And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." Have people been doing this? No, they have not; they went out to meet the bridegroom, but the wise virgins slept as well as the foolish.

Supposing I know salvation, what am I waiting for? For mortality to be swallowed up of life - to be changed into the same glory as Christ - to be raised, if I am dead - I am looking to be like Him in the glory. I need two things to be able to call it a "blessed hope:" first, the grace that bringeth salvation - that He has redeemed, purified, and saved me, and I have the certainty of His love. The second thing is, that He is the object of my delight. We must know the perfect salvation, but we must have the love of Christ in our hearts, to care about it.

Only one other thing I would desire should rest on our hearts, and that is the full, thorough, complete interest He takes in us. What satisfies Him? He is waiting in perfect, earnest love to us, but His heart will never be satisfied till He has us in the same glory with Himself and His Father. I know, poor unworthy creature as I am, that He will not be satisfied till He has me in the same glory as Himself, because He loves me. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." How is it that He does not give like the world? If I give away a thing I no longer possess it - is that the way Christ gives? Never! The way He gives is to bring us into the enjoyment of all He has Himself. Everything that Christ has (except His divinity) He brings us into,

and then He is satisfied.

And now, beloved, is that the way you think about the Lord Jesus Christ? What made Him give it all to us - did any one ask Him? It was the perfect love. And is that unrevealed? It is not; He has loved us and given Himself for us, and it is revealed from Christ in the glory and we have the Holy Ghost. If I am thinking of the things in the world, of course I cannot see the thing up there, for the eye is dimmed and cannot see afar off. Are you content to have such a place as that with Christ in glory? Are you content to be purified to Himself - to give up the world? Are you content to have Christ your one and only object and motive? Of course it tests the flesh and heart of man, and God means it to be tested. Are you content to follow Christ? The apostle says that that is the whole bent of his mind, "That I may win Christ" - and to know Him better. The secret of all that is the constant sense of dependence. "My strength is made perfect in weakness," We are redeemed from this present evil world. It is a world that has rejected the Son of God already. Man is a judged being, but there is salvation for him. Christ's work entitles me to the glory; and now, says Christ, I am come to have you for Myself, like Myself, and with Myself in glory. Beloved, are our hearts there? Have we tasted the love of Christ in all His life and death down here? And it is not wearied, or exhausted, or cooled, for He loves and cherishes us as His own flesh.

The Lord give us only to remember that the fashion of this world passeth away; but there is one thing that abides for ever, and that is the word of God - that through His grace, we may follow hard after Him. Oh, it is a wonderful thing that the Son of God became a man, on purpose to win us back to God.

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