

Survey of the New Testament 01

Hist.-Diadactic-Prophetic

by Neil Fraser

Neil Fraser's sermon explores the New Testament's structure and the transformative power of God's grace in salvation and spiritual growth.

Duration: 34:39

Scripture: Romans 1:20, Titus 2:11-14

Topics: "Salvation By Grace", "Gods Wrath"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the four aspects of grace: what it has brought, what it has taught, what it has wrought, and what it has sought. The focus of this sermon is on what grace has brought, specifically salvation. The preacher emphasizes that while the wrath of God brings damnation, we should not rebel against God but rather recognize our disobedience. The preacher also highlights the role of the law in revealing our sinfulness and the need for salvation through grace. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the power of God in creation and the importance of looking forward to the blessed hope of Christ's return.

Transcript

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Now, I hope to show that these verses are indeed the basis of a survey of the entire New Testament. We're going to see that verse 11, for instance, for the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared.

We shall think, as we think of that verse, of the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, because in those books, the grace of God in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord appears. The New Testament, we may say, has three main divisions. It is partly historical.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and Acts are the historical books. And then, when you start with Romans and go all the way through to Jude, these are the epistles. These are the books that teach us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

And then, when we come to a revelation, as we shall see, we are taught to look for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ. You see, now that's the plan that I have in mind. We shall look at the historical books.

We shall look at them individually, the Lord willing, on Tuesday morning. So, it is partly historical, the New Testament. It is partly didactical, which means the teaching portions, and it is partly prophetic.

Now, this is not to say that there are no prophecies in the gospel, nor yet any teaching in the Acts, nor any gospel or history in the epistle, but just to say that, generally speaking, the first five books of the New Testament are historical in character. Generally speaking, from Romans to Jude, they are didactical in character. They are the teaching portions.

And then, the last book, we are taught to look for that blessed hope, that rapture, and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. That's the revelation of Christ our Lord, you see. So, that will be the basis of our study.

Now, let me say also at the beginning four things which I will elaborate upon just a little. The power of God brought creation, the law of God brought condemnation, the grace of God brought salvation, and the wrath of God brings damage. Now, first of all, the power of God brought creation.

The Bible says that God's eternal power and Godhead are understood by the things that are made, you see. We see God's power manifested in creation. We read in Romans chapter 1 that those invisible things of the workings of God are clearly manifested in the things that are made.

You take my watch, for instance. All these little wheels didn't jump up there by themselves and start going. We recognize the fact that some intelligent person put those things together.

I'll take the parts of my car. Nobody would suppose that those wheels and those shafts and those wires all jumped into that engine by themselves and started going. Somebody had to put them there, some intelligent person.

So, the watch and the car shows a creator, but you can't tell by the watch or the car whether that creator was black or white, whether he was a good man or bad man, whether he was a married man or a single man, whether he was a faithful husband or an unfaithful husband. That is to say, the watch or the car is limited in its revelation of the creator, you see. Now, the world around us is marvelous and shows us something of the wisdom, the intelligence and power of God.

But creation in itself is inadequate. It's not enough for you to say, I can go out into the hills and worship, that's good enough for me. No, the revelation of God in creation is limited.

Creation doesn't show moral distinctions. Or we can suppose that God must be very benevolent, for we think of the fact he didn't just put one seed in an orange or grapefruit, he put many seeds, many, many seeds in the pawpaw, which we have been greatly enjoying in Spanish wealth. He could have put one seed in order to keep the species in propagation, but he put dozens, sometimes hundreds of seeds.

Now that shows the benevolence of God, the prodigality of God in nature. But creation is limited. The power of God brought creation, but the law of God brought condemnation.

The law of God came in to make moral distinctions. The law said thou shalt, thou shalt not. God was anxious to give a moral law.

But man did not like the moral law of God. Mankind rebelled against it, and still rebels against the law of God. The apostle Paul tells us himself that the law was the means of his discovering that he was a transgressor.

I had not known sin, said he, except the law had said thou shalt not kill it. I discovered, he says, that which was ordained to life I found instead dead. He says the commandment took occasion, or sin took occasion by that very commandment to slay me.

The law of God brings condemnation. We can never trust in the commandments as a basis for being saved. The law can only condemn us.

The Ten Commandments are summed up in the words, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength and mind. That's the first four commandments. And thy neighbor as thyself.

That's the other six commandments. But nobody loves God with all his heart and soul and strength and mind. We don't love God like that, dear friend.

There are a hundred and sixty-eight hours in the week. How many do we give to God? Do we give him a hundred? Oh, you say, of course not. Do we give fifty? No.

Twenty? No. Would you say you give God ten hours in the week? Ten hours completely given over to God? Oh, you say, no, of course not. Well, how about five? Well, no, I don't give God five in a week.

Well, how about four? How about three? How about two? How about one? You see, we don't love God with all our heart and soul and strength and mind, nor do we love our neighbor as ourselves. Are you as much concerned about your neighbor's welfare as your own? Are you as much concerned about your neighbor's children as your own? Are you as much concerned about your neighbor's bank account as your own? I think it was Dr. Wollstone of Edinburgh, Scotland, who was on a case one day, and somebody rushed in and said, Doctor, your house is on fire. And he rushed out and ran up the hill.

And as he got to the top, breathless, somebody says, What's the matter, Doctor? You're in a hurry. He says, My house is on fire. He says, No, it isn't.

It's your neighbor's. He says, Thank God. And he discovered he didn't love his neighbor as himself.

If he had, he'd be just as much concerned about his neighbor's house as his own. Now, it's not a matter of doing your best. The law said, Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things.

Written in the book of the law says it is. The law brings condemnation. But the grace of God, we read here, brings salvation.

After 1,500 years of man breaking the law, God brought salvation. This portion I read to you gives us really four things. What grace has brought salvation? What grace has taught to live soberly, righteously, and godly? What grace has wrought a blessed hope, and the glory is appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ? And what grace has sought a people zealous of good works? So, you see, we've got four things here.

What grace has brought? What grace has taught? We'll go into that. What grace has wrought a blessed hope for resolve? And what grace has ever sought a people zealous of good works? We are concerned today with a third of the four. What grace has brought salvation? Now, I said also that the wrath of God brings damnation.

Now, we shouldn't quarrel with God, and we shouldn't be rebellious because of that statement, and because of what God says about him, and the consequences of our disobedience. After all, we don't quarrel with the chemist, much less with the bottle. If we find we've got a some medicine in our hand, and it says poison, and there's a skull and crossbones on the bottle, we don't quarrel with the chemist, much less the bottle, because we realize that that chemist is afraid.

Even the bottle is afraid to warn us against the abuse of this thing. Now, don't quarrel with God because he says that his wrath brings damnation, much less quarrel with his bottle, that is, the servant who's with you today and seeks to bring to you the medicine of God. Let's recognize that disobedience ever results in judgment.

All right, these four things. Now, as we think of these verses again, I want to give you other three little words. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared.

We're going to think of salvation teaching us, and we're going to think of education looking for, and we're going to think of expectation. Those three words. Salvation, education, expectation.

Now, the grace of God has never begun to teach you anything yet, unless it has brought you salvation to begin with. Salvation is a starting point, see? Many people wonder why they don't grow spiritually, because they've got no life. Number of years ago, I heard a man from Sweden, who had been in Sweden, who had gone back for a trip to the old country.

Boy, that man had amazing power to make you laugh and cry as he told you about his experience. One of them was that he'd come to his native village after so many, many years. They pointed out to him a certain house where an old couple had been living.

Very old couple. The man was very, very old, and his wife was getting quite senile. But the neighbors kept to look out for them, watched to see that the smoke was coming out of the chimney each day.

If it wasn't, they went over to inquire. On this morning, they didn't see any smoke coming out of the chimney, and so they went over to investigate. And when they went into the house, they saw the old woman standing by the bed.

In her hand, she had a little bowl of porridge, a little bowl of gruel, and she was trying to feed it to her husband in bed, and he was dead. She didn't know he was dead. She just knew that he needed his morning gruel.

And there she was, trying to feed good food to a dead body. Friends, I want to say this morning kindly, if you've never been born again, maybe you've been trying to get food, or maybe the preacher has been trying to give you the good food of the Word of God, and you're dead. You've never had any life towards God.

That's very tragic, isn't it? You can never grow until there's life, and you can never be taught until there's life there first. There's life, and then learning. There's life, and then growth.

So, the grace of God comes to us bringing salvation. You see? The Bible says the law was given by Moses. It was imposed on them.

You see? They said, all that thou sayest, O God, all that thou sayest we will do. They were confident they could meet God's claim. So, the law was imposed.

The law was given by God. But grace and truth came by Jesus. It was gratuitous.

It was bestowed. It was voluntary on the part of God, and on the part of Christ. You see? For the grace of God, that bringeth.

And the wonderful thing about it is this, that the grace of God brings salvation right to where you are. In your home, in your pew, on the street, it comes right to you when you desire it to come. Isn't it wonderful? Coming right to you.

The grace of God that bringeth salvation. In fact, Paul says, say not in thy heart who shalt ascend to heaven to bring Christ down, or who shalt ascend to bring him up. The word is nice, even in thy mouth.

That is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men. Now, let's be very clear then, that we have to have life before we can grow.

We have to have life before we can begin any education in our spiritual career. Sometimes I liken these three verses I've read to you to the process of secular education. Now, you remember years ago, nine years ago, when you first went to school, that first day when you set out for school, they all dressed up.

As Charles Dickens would say, brave in collars, or ribbons as the case might be. Now, the first thing that happened to you was that you got your name written in the book. You were enrolled for school.

That was necessary. And then, afterwards, began the long process of education. But you had to be enrolled first.

There was the initiation with your name in the books. Now, spiritually, friends, our religious education begins when our names are down in the book. Amen? Jesus said, rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Paul says, help those women whose names are in the book of life. And the Bible says, whosoever was not found written in the Lamb's book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

That's very sad. So, let me ask you this this morning. Have you had the experience of having your name written in heaven? Rejoice, said Christ, that your names are written.

Not that they might be, or they may be, or they will be. Rejoice that your names are written in heaven. On the day you trust Christ and you're born again, the Bible says, the Lord shall count when he righteth up the people that this man was born again, that this woman was born again.

There's a man here this morning, and if he lives until tomorrow, it's 65 years since he was born again, our brother Mr. Buck. Sixty-five years tomorrow, the Lord spares him, when his name was in the book. Is your

name in the book? Don't linger, friends.

Don't wait. Make this the day that you said, I want to know my name. And it's then that the long process of education begins.

Now, in our secular life, of course, that long process of education may go on for eight years. It may go on for 12 years. It may even go on for 16 years.

Depending on the, I was going to say, the desire of the pupil. Maybe I should say the will of the parent. Sometimes the desire of the student and the will of the parent are not in happy compatibility.

But anyway, the long process of education begins. I heard about a wee boy who came home after his first day of school. His mother said, how did you get on at school? Oh, he says, all right, but they want me to go back again tomorrow.

He thought it was a one-day process. He discovered the long, hard grind was just beginning, going for years and years. Well, sooner or later, however, there comes graduation.

Initiation, education, graduation. Now, happily, it's called commencement exercise. You know why? Because it's just beginning.

The long thing is just beginning. The education was the experiment. Now they've been ushered out into the experience, you see.

The education is experimental, experiential, experimental. And then you go out into the school of experience, graduation. Now, the grace of God brings salvation.

That's the initiation into the family of God, teaching us the process of spiritual education, and then graduation, looking for that blessed hope and the appealing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. And some of us friends are just waiting, somewhat impatiently at times, for graduation. Amen? I hope you're getting homesick for heaven.

I hope you are. Graduation, looking for the blessed hope, that's the rapture of the church, and the appealing of the glory, that's the revelation of Christ in glory. The blessed hope is in connection with the church.

The appealing of the glory is in connection with Israel, in particular, and the world at large. And that's our expectation. That's when commencement exercises begin.

Did you know that? When Christ comes, commencement exercises are just beginning. The Bible says that in the ages to come, God is going to show us the exceeding riches of his grace. You know, there's only been about five or six ages that have come so far.

Age of innocence, age of human conscience, age of government, age of law, age of grace, where we are now, tribulation age, millennial age. But that's not the end. The apostle Paul says that by grace we have been saved, in order that in the ages to come, God will show us the exceeding riches of his grace, amen, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

And it will take all the ages to come. Now, the ages that already passed have been progressive. We have gone from the earliest revelation of God, right up and up and up.

Did you know that there will be ages to come, when we'll be making fresh discoveries about God, fresh discoveries about the glories that God has for us, and it's going to take the ages to come. That's commencement exercises. And blessed be God, commencement exercises might begin in 73.

Amen. Now, after salvation comes education. Now, this education for us as Christians must run in three directions.

We are to live soberly, unrighteously, and godly in this present world. You see, soberly means that you'll be right yourself, self-worth. Righteously means you'll be right towards your neighbor.

Godly, the life towards God, you see. And the epistles, as we shall say, teach us how to live soberly in our homes, at work, and in the church. Soberly.

Righteously, towards the world, towards our neighbor, whether Christians or not. And godly, in our devotional life towards God, you see. Now, we need to be aware of these three aspects and avenues of our spiritual life.

We're to live soberly. That doesn't just mean that you don't get drunk, because the apostle Paul speaks of sober-mindedness. When you read the Acts of the Apostles, it begins with the apostles being accused of being drunk, and finishes with an apostle being accused of being mad.

But in each case, both Peter and Paul said, no, not so. We speak words of truth and soberness. Sober words.

We're to be sober in our thinking. If we are sober in our thinking, we'll not be guilty of hasty words. We'll not be guilty of carping criticism.

We'll not be guilty of saying things that sometimes, and sometimes not, we regret afterwards. Soberness will keep a watch upon the door of our lips, lest we transgress with our tongues. Soberness will make us utter a prayer to God, oh God, help me to play this instrument of ten strings which I present to thy praise and glory.

Lord, make my two ears, my two eyes, my mouth, my two arms, my two feet, and my one heart. Help them to unite in service and praise to thee. We're to live soberly.

We are to be right in ourselves, and then righteously. Grace teaches us to live righteously before other people. And I have said, other people, whether they are Christians or not, makes no difference.

Did you know that the term good works is used in the New Testament? That the first and last occurrence of the term good works are a repetition of the same. The Lord Jesus said, let your light so shine before men that they may behold your good works, and glorify your Father. It doesn't say glorify their Father, as if they were children of God, no.

That they may behold your good works and glorify your Father. Your good works are going out towards those that we call the unsung. Now Peter just repeats those words of Christ in the last occurrence of good works, when he says, let your manner of life be without covetousness, or rather, that men may see your good works and glorify God in the day of visitation.

Let your conversation be honest amongst the gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God. He's their God, in the day of visitation.

So that the first and last mention of good works is not your relation towards your fellow believer, much less your children.

That's your duty. But towards the world. Concerning Joseph, it was said, Joseph is a fruitful bough whose branches run over the wall.

And your branch of fruitfulness and mind, beloved, has to go over the wall to the world at large. That's good works. Are you, do you show good works to your neighbor? That neighbor that you don't quite like.

That workmate that you don't quite like. You wish he would move away. God says our good works are those that run over the wall, and reach those on the other side, and give in.

So we're to live righteously. We'll be honest in business, not dishonest. We'll not put something out and misrepresent that which we're selling.

We shall not be over-anxious to overcharge. We shall not be guilty of excessive profits because we're getting by. No.

Having your conversation, honest and honest Gentiles, soberly, righteously towards your neighbor, and godly in this present world. Your life towards God, your devotional life, your prayer life, your reading of the Holy Scriptures, your sacrificial giving to the work of the Lord, godly. So that's the process of education.

And it's to go right on, right on, right on. Until when? Looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. The term glory applied to the coming of the Lord.

It is a rule applied not to the sudden twinkling of a night rapture of the church, but to the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ of Europe. Now when you come to the last book of Revelation, although the vision of it takes place on the Lord's day, the book is largely taken up with the day of the Lord, which is the day of judgment. There's all the difference in a New Testament between the day of Christ and the day of the Lord.

The day of Christ is an anticipation. The day of the Lord is apprehension. The apostle Paul says, I may rejoice in the day of Christ, in having you in heaven, and seeing you go on.

But the day of the Lord, according to the Old Testament, is a day of war, a day of judgment, a day of apprehension upon the world. But Revelation teaches us to look for the blessed hope. You have that in the early chapters of Revelation, where the church is seen in seven aspects.

And then at the end it says, and I saw, and behold, the door was opened in heaven, and all the redeemed are seen there. And then when the books are opened, you have the day of the Lord, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ after the tribulation day. So that's how far we'll go this morning.

What grace has brought, what grace has taught, what grace has wrought a blessed hope, and what grace has ever sought a people of good works. Now, in the will of the Lord, we'll continue on Tuesday morning, and we shall consider the grace of God appearing in the person of Jesus Christ, historically given to us in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and Acts. I'd like to show you the individual character of these books, why they are different, and how they unite to present salvation historically through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Shall we please stand for the closing benediction? And shall we stand quietly while the music is softly being played? I'll get a chance to go to the back. Gracious God our Father, we thank thee for being with us this morning. We thank you for all those that have come.

Bless the homes from which we have come. Make our homes happy in the arrival of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us as men and women, as husbands and fathers, to be the people we should be before our families and our neighbors, living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.

And as we go, Father, keep us looking for the Lord from heaven, in whose name we give thanks. And now we pray with the love of God our Father, on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be upon us all. Amen.

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