

# Studies in Titus - Part 2

by Paris Reidhead

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of denying ungodliness and repentance in order to be saved and become a true disciple of Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 47:23

**Scripture:** Proverbs 29:1, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 13:11, Ephesians 6:17, Titus 2:12, Hebrews 9:27

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, a young preacher delivers a sermon on the topic of death and judgment. Despite not having much material, he repeatedly emphasizes his main text, which states that it is appointed for man to die and then face judgment. Some people at the door were not impressed with his sermon, but one man couldn't shake the impact of the text and sought out the preacher for guidance. The preacher explains the five steps to salvation: awakening, conviction, repentance, saving faith, and the resulting regeneration and justification. The sermon concludes with a prayer for the truth to take hold and for the opportunity to faithfully witness to others about Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

Titus chapter 2, Titus chapter 2, verses 11 to 14. This is Mother's Day. I never know quite what to say, but I made a promise when I was first church, I was pastor.

Mother's Day came and went, and I never mentioned it. And dear Mrs. Charlie Peterson said, don't ever do that again. And so, lest there should be some serious consequences for my breaking that promise, I'm prepared to say this is Mother's Day.

And we are grateful that we have a day. I'm always a little reluctant to say too much. I had, we had a teacher in a church in New York, been in the Long Island school for years.

And she told of two ladies that went to a Catholic church on Mother's Day. One of them had one sweet little girl and the other had seven ruffian boys. And the pastor of the church, father, was declaiming about all the marvels of motherhood.

And the mother of the sweet little girl was just thrilled with everything that he said. And she kept, did you hear that? Did you hear that? Did you hear that? And finally the mother of the seven ruffian boys said, yes I heard it. And yes it's lovely and yes it's sweet.

But I just wish to heaven I didn't know any more about the subject than he does. And there are times when I think that I don't know a great deal about that subject. And I'm reluctant to say more than that.

It's a tremendous responsibility to be a father. It is. And it's strange how the scripture says, as the father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that seek him.

And I suppose that fathers have that ability, at least God called attention to it through David, to pity. Mothers have a far greater responsibility than that. And they seem to exercise it in on hold with great wisdom and patience.

And it's a delight to honor mothers. I want to say this, it's much easier to be a grandparent than a parent. And I know that.

We have eight grandchildren, seven boys and one girl. And this morning Marjorie got a telephone call from our six-year-old. And he wished Grandma a happy mother's day.

And then the four-year-old came on and did the same. And then little Sarah, the only girl in the group, did the same. Samuel would have, but he's only seven months, so his telephone is pretty weak.

Father in heaven, we thank you and praise you for this privilege we have of living, serving, loving, learning, walking with thee. We pray that today we may sense thy presence with us. Minister to us through thy word and cause the word to be quickened to us.

Let the word come off the page and into our minds and into our hearts and govern and control our lives. How we do rejoice that the very Holy Spirit that moved Paul to write to Titus is here to illumine our minds and to teach us the word, help us to make it experientially our own. And we thank thee for all thou wilt do because we do pray in Jesus' worthy name.

Amen. 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. Denying ungodliness.

We saw last time I was with you, two weeks ago, that God has one plan of salvation and everyone to whom God brings salvation is taught identically the same thing. Whether it's in whatever language, whatever culture, among whatever people we are. Always the same.

And so we're seeing here that the first aspect of this is teaching us the denying ungodliness. Look at the word for a minute. Ungodliness.

Un means no. God, of course, is God. Leanness.

Lovely. It's living or existing as in accord with love. Badly.

Cruelly. And it's that L-Y, here L-I, that we're seeing. Ungodly.

Having actions inconsistent with a point of view. And ness, of course, changes it again. So really what they're saying is that at some point in time, individuals must have decided that they were going to live or act or have their being as if there were no God.

Because we're denying. Now denying has to be the fact that at some place there was an affirming. Otherwise it's relatively insignificant.

To affirm no God, to live or exist as if there were no God. Well, where would this occur in the course of life and history? Well, doesn't the scripture make it quite clear to us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All have sinned.

It isn't hard to understand that at some point in our life, a decision was made that we were going to live or exist or have our being as if there were no God. Now, the prophet Isaiah said, All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way.

Gone astray to his own way. Well, what would to his own way imply? Wouldn't it imply I'm going to do what I want to do? I'm going to please me? I think it does. I think that's what it's talking about.

So, to affirm ungodliness could be that at the age of accountability, we actually made a commitment to live as if there were no God. We decided that, oh, it didn't mean we weren't going to tip our hat or go through the motions. Who wants to get a fuss, you know? It doesn't mean that we're going to go out like Robert Ingersoll started to, as an atheist.

I'm not talking about that. It's just to live as if there were no God. It doesn't mean to declare belligerent, vociferous warfare against God.

It's just that at some point in time when we were capable of making decisions, we decided that we were going to govern our life by a principle, and that principle was I'm going to do what I want to do. That's the essence of sin. That's what it is.

But its essence here, it's described here as being to live as if there were no God or to govern oneself as though God wasn't. Now, it says that everyone to whom God brings salvation is taught to deny, renounce, repudiate living as if there were no God. Now, that has to be a pretty important aspect of this matter of salvation because look where it is.

The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. We don't want to overlook that. Now, if that's true, what I said earlier, everyone to whom the grace of God has brought salvation has been taught identically the same thing, then you will expect that everyone who claims to be saved has at some point in time made a decision to repudiate the right to live as if there were no God.

Now, the essence of living as if there were no God is I'm going to do what I want to do. Now, to repudiate that has to mean something else, doesn't it? Has to mean I'm going to do what you want me to do because if there's a God, then he has to be obeyed, respected, served. So, the first thing that we see when the grace of God brings salvation has to deal with this issue, who's going to be boss? Now, you would... I remember reading a book years ago.

I haven't written any books. I have a few with my name on them, but I didn't write them. I preached them, and somebody said, oh, that ought to be in print.

And then they said, would you mind if we transcribed that from the tapes and published it? I said, I wouldn't mind as long as you correct my syntax because you understand when you're speaking, you punctuate with gesture, with pause, with, well, a variety of things. And when you transcribe, you don't get

the gesture and the pause, and sometimes the syntax comes out horrible. And I have enough problem with it when I'm writing.

I just don't want to have it aggravated by it. So I said, yeah, you correct the syntax, and correct the... and so on. And then it just grew ahead.

But I didn't write the books. And I've always been afraid to. I really have.

Because some of my friends wrote books. And a little while after they were published, they wished they hadn't. I think maybe sometime I will, but none yet.

At any rate, this man wrote a book. And he called in. In it he said, it's easy to be saved.

All you have to do is accept Jesus. But it's hard to become a disciple because that really takes commitment. Well, that's a pretty nice phrase, isn't it? It's easy to be saved.

All you do is accept Jesus. It's hard to become a disciple. And it's rather like the dear lady down south that worked for a family of friends of ours, Andy so-and-so, and she was given a commentary, one of these one-volume commentaries, Jameson, Fawcett, Brown, or something.

Very good. And after about a year or so, Andy, how did you like the book we gave you? Oh, you mean that commentary? Oh, that's a fine book. I want you to know the Bible sure does throw a lot of light on that book.

Well, the Bible throws a lot of light on a lot of books. And so one day, I took my friend's book that says it's easy to be saved. You just accept Jesus.

But it's hard to become a disciple. So I just took the word, my concordance, and the word disciple, and I started to go through the Scripture wherever the word disciple occurred. And you know what I found out? I found out that disciple means learner.

It means student. Now, when you're in kindergarten learning to read, you're a student. You're a learner.

And when you're a Ph.D. candidate and you're attending seminars, you're a student. You're a learner. And when you're post-doctoral student and you're still doing research, what are you doing? You're still learning.

Is there ever a time that you cease to be a student? None of you understood what your education was all about. The function of education is not to teach you what to know, but teach you how to find out what you need to know. When you discover you need to know it.

And you're always a student. You're always a learner. So a disciple.

That's all it means. It means a learner. Somebody who puts himself under a teacher.

And you know what I discovered? I discovered that some of his disciples... Well, you might like to see where I found it. John chapter 6. John chapter 6. Oh, it's interesting. In verse 66.

What did he say? In verse 53, I say, And you except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. And in verse 60, Many therefore as disciples when they heard this said, This is a hard saying. Who can hear it? And in verse 66, From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.

What's it say? Well, they were learners. They stayed in school long enough to learn how to have eternal life. And they didn't like that lesson, so they quit school.

That doesn't say anything about being a cut above saved, does it? Huh? Doesn't say a word. So my friend who said, It's easy to be saved, you except Jesus, but it's hard to be a disciple, had never read John 6.66. If he had, he'd have never made that silly statement. Now you see why I'm afraid to write books.

I get caught in a corner like he was. Because disciple does not mean one cut, one level, one degree above salvation. It just means learners.

Now, it isn't easy to be saved. It isn't hard, but it isn't easy. It just means that the grace of God that brings salvation does certain things, teaches certain things.

And the first thing it teaches us is to deny, to repudiate the principle of living as if there were no God. Of ruling and controlling and governing our life as though we were God. In other words, the essence of what the sinner's soliloquy, if you will, is this.

I am going to do what I want to do. I am going to decide how to gratify my appetites and satisfy my urges and fulfill my desires. I am going to be God in my own life.

I am the captain of my fate. I am the master of myself. That's the soliloquy of the sinner.

That's what he's saying. Now, the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us that denying ungodliness, living as if there were no God other than oneself. Now, you have to understand, therefore, that this is an event.

And therefore, when you see that event, then you realize that it's more than just an effect of salvation. It's also a condition for salvation. Now, we see that in the ministry of Paul.

Paul is giving account of his preaching and he is saying, as he does justify his work, he said, speaking of the people of Ephesus, I was with you night and day, from house to house, teaching repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And repentance is, in its essence, its meaning is this, to change one's mind, one's purpose, one's intention, to change the principle of government of one's life. Now, except you repent, in Luke 13, 3, said the Lord Jesus, you shall all likewise perish.

And the second time, in the fifth verse, that was the third verse, he said, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish. Once he said, you must be born again. He said also, except a man be born again, he cannot see.

But twice he said, except you repent, you'll perish. Why? Because it deals with this principle of denying ungodliness, denying the right to rule, because the essence of sin is, I'm going to do what I want to do. And there is no possibility of forgiveness while the sinner's mind is set to do evil.

Or while his will is fixed to go on in revolt and rebellion against God, there is no possibility of forgiveness. That does not mean that he can't memorize the plan of salvation. And the Scripture verses that support the plan of salvation.

That does not mean that he cannot memorize the theology of salvation, the historicity of the death and burial and resurrection of Christ. But it does mean there can be no saving reception of Christ until one has repentance. And repentance is a prerequisite too.

Remember when you were in college and you had to take 101 and 102 before you could take 204 and 206? It had prerequisites. This is required before you can do that. And repentance is required before you can savingly believe.

You can intellectually ascend anytime. Do you see the difference? So many, many people are going to miss heaven by about 18 inches. It doesn't concern most folks.

It does me. It concerns me to think that when I was a young fellow in Bible school and just out in my early ministry, I had been taught how to do personal work, especially with children. So when I would go where I was going to be ministered to children, I'd take along a handful of nickels.

And I could get as many converts as I had nickels. Do you understand? I would say, now look, this is a gift. Salvation is a gift.

You come and take it. Now what's that mean? That means you received Christ. And so I'd chalk up another one.

Now I was a youngster just out of Bible school, but I was talking to a man here who was the vice president of a very large institution in Washington. And he told me, as of a certain year, some years ago, Brother Parrish, last year I had the joy of leading 467 people to the Lord. Well, I said, that's fine.

How many the year before that? Well, he said, it wasn't that many. It was about 415. What about the year before that? Oh, he said, that was a bad year.

It was only about 375. Well, I'm not a, I don't think I'm an iconoclast. I don't go around breaking down icons, but once in a while.

So I said, great. That's marvelous. I'm delighted to hear that.

One question. How many of that group last year that you led to the Lord are you still in touch with on any kind of a regular basis? Oh, he said, I don't stay in touch with them. Oh, you don't? Do you have somebody that does? No, no.

He said, I just committed to the Lord. Now, I said, last year, 467. Would you do me a favor? Look, I'm so interested in this.

Let's see if we can find, I'd like to talk with just five. It wouldn't be very difficult for you. Would you get five people I could talk to of that number? I just, I'm always interested in learning.

Well, he said, yeah. I said, and get me five from the year before and five from the, I said, that wouldn't be very many. It's less than 2%.

Would you mind if you were to do that? Then I'll just clear my calendar to meet with them. Well, sure, sure. I'd be glad to.

But he never did. I'm having a little difficulty. I'll have it.

Then I dropped it. Now, why? Why was I concerned? Remember John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress? Remember it tells about the religious man who came to the river of death in his analogy, allegory. He came to the river, crossed over very easily.

The boat's there to the right. But when he came to the gate of the city, there was no one there to meet him. There were guards on the tower over the gate and the gate was closed.

And he shouted up to the guards and said, By the way, I'm professing believer. I'm here. Oh, we've had no notice of anyone coming to whom the gate should be opened.

Well, listen. You go to the ruler of this place and tell him that I knew him well. I preached in his name.

I performed miracles in his name. He taught in our streets and I was with him. You go and tell him and he'll surely open the gate to me.

The one in charge of the watchman at the gate did send one straightway to the ruler of the place who quickly came back and said, Bind him hand and foot and have him away. And John Bunyan said, I did see them take him and bind him. And they did carry him back across the river to the mountain.

And there was opened a hole. And they did place him in. And thus I did know that there was a way to hell from the gates of heaven as well as from the city of destruction.

Serious. Serious. Extremely serious.

Many will say unto me in that day and I will say unto them, Away with you. I never knew you. I never ask anyone anymore, Do you know the Lord? Because I found multitudes of people know the Lord whom apparently He doesn't know.

I rather ask the question this way, When did you first realize the Lord knew you and owned you as His? Witness of the Spirit that you were born of God. You know, I'd like to get it. I haven't had it for years.

I had a copy. I don't know what happened to it. With friends like mine, I really never needed enemies through the years.

And it's really been my books. Now when I loan a book, I say after five years, please return. Because I do want to have some way.

Perhaps they'll remember. But I loaned somebody my original Jonathan Edwards, Life of David Brainerd. David Brainerd was Edward's son-in-law.

And he knew him very well. Oh, what am I? I'm tired up here. Knew him very well.

And so he wrote this. And he wrote very, very extensively from Brainerd's diary. On one occasion, Brainerd was ministering to the Indians in New Jersey.

It's hard to think of any Indians in New Jersey anymore. They're all over in Brooklyn, the Bronx. But they were back in the woods in New Jersey for a long time.

And Brainerd would minister to them. And his diary that Edwards quoted from extensively had this. It said, Today I did minister.

I have been suffering such opposition that I did find myself dwelling upon the promises and the encouragements in the scripture to the saints to endure persecution. And did so minister in both the services of the morning. And to my delight, said he, I found that in the first service there were six, and in the second village there were seven who did profess faith in Christ.

And I do rejoice this night. Though I find of my health I am very weak. There has been reward for my labor.

And the next day, Monday, I did not sleep during the night and was throughout the entire night coughing and spitting blood. I could not sleep for my heart was sore troubled, thinking that perhaps these who yet were dead in their sins had mistaken the consolations to the saints as though it applied to them. And so this day I must go to every house in every village where there was one who professed faith in the Lord on the Lord's day, Tuesday.

Alas, alas, my worst fears were realized. For of the thirteen there were but two that gave evidence of good hope in Jesus Christ. Ah, to think that the other eleven might have through my unskillful service presumed themselves to be right with God, died in their sins, and risen up in the lake of fire to curse me before Him who sits upon the throne for my being an unfaithful servant who deceived them about the most important subject in all the world.

Well, whatever our day and time and generation thinks, I'm glad to say there have been some in other days and times and generations who've thought this to be a very important and a very serious subject. I've reminded you in other times and other visits that the churches of England closed to John Wesley not because he was orthodox or fundamental in his theology, but because he dared to affirm with conviction that the only one in the universe that has the right to tell a human being that they've been born into the family of God is the sovereign Holy Spirit who is the spirit of adoption and who has reserved to himself the right to declare to all who thus are born into the family of God that they are God's children. And he does it by witnessing to our spirit enabling us to cry, Abba Father.

Now, for that reason, the churches of England closed to John Wesley because he dared to say no one in the universe had the right to think themselves a child of God unless they had the witness of the spirit to the new birth. And everyone who has the witness of the spirit who having been born of God will have been taught to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts because the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us that God is never going to contradict himself. Never going to contradict himself.

Never going to misrepresent himself to anyone. So, the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, that's the repudiation of a principle I'm going to rule my life. We equate it with repentance, a change of mind about who's to be boss.

It is a prerequisite to forgiveness. It's a prerequisite to saving faith. It's a prerequisite, I say, to being granted and able to savingly reach out through 2,000 years of history and embrace the Son of God.

Now, I did not say it is a prerequisite to intellectual assent. Because anyone with it in mind so to do can assent and affirm that what the Bible says is true. But because one affirms that what the Bible says is true does not make it true in one.

It's not true in me because I say it's true here. I have to believe it's true here before it becomes true in me. But it isn't an assumption I make.

I can't assume that because my mind says this is true, that it is necessarily true in me. I have to have further corroboration that it's true in me. Do you understand? This was what Wesley said to a whole nation that believed that what the Bible said was true.

But it's great to believe it's true. But it's not enough until you know it's true in you. And how do you know it's true in you? Oh, then we come to that sovereign ministry of God the Holy Ghost, the spirit of adoption,

bearing witness with our spirit.

So, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts is an aspect. How many times in the past I put this on the board, I don't know. Perhaps if I ever have the privilege of coming again, I'll do it again.

What did I do? Whatever it is, it'll stop. Don't you think God had made a good teacher? Awakening. And then the next is conviction.

The reason I can do this so well, I've got a little computer and I'm learning how to spell. Awakening conviction. Repentance.

And then faith. But this is saving faith, not just crediting the scripture to be true. And then the witness of the spirit.

My arm isn't long enough. There it is. These are the five steps up to life if you want to reverse them.

Awakening. That's that work of the spirit of God we talked about last time. Conviction.

Repentance. That change of mind. That repudiating of this.

There isn't any God but me. I'm going to do what I want to do. On the basis of which there is this saving faith that reaches out to embrace the Son of God and results.

I haven't put in there the two things that take place. One in the heart. Regeneration.

The other in heaven. Justification. I'm implying all of those in the witness of the spirit.

Now once one understands this, then you can understand that when you are working with someone, you have a friend, or a neighbor, a loved one, a son or a daughter, husband or wife, and you want to see them. Notice the one word that isn't here. Saved.

I didn't put it down. Why? Because this is an aspect of salvation. This is all part of it.

The grace of God that brings salvation. Remember I said salvation is a great word. It goes to eternity past and to eternity future.

It includes everything that God does for us. So I didn't put the word saved down. You're meeting somebody.

You're working with someone in your office. Someone you meet in an organization you belong to, a club you're part of. And they think you become concerned.

They do. You have an opportunity. You know there's never conversion without contact.

You know that. No conversion without contact. Has to be contact.

If God doesn't have any other way, He's going to say to Philip, hey leave this big meeting. I've got some folks that can take care of it. And you go down where I'll show you.

And he starts trodding down. And he happens to arrive at the crossroad just when the chariot is coming by from Jerusalem. And he sees the Ethiopian eunuch.

Has to have contact for there to be conversion. And God often goes to great lengths to raise that contact. And you're here.

So what are you going to do? What's his state? What's the state of mind of this person? Oh, well they're not awake. There's no evidence that there's any awakening. So what do you do? Well, we told you last time, you live Christ before them, you intercede for them, you witness to them.

Well, what do you witness? The kind of Scripture that has the effect of producing awakening. You know those Scriptures? You ought to. Maybe I ought to help you with them.

You ought to memorize them. Oh, let's take one for instance. You give me another.

I'll give you one. He that being often reprov'd hardens his neck shall suddenly be destroyed. That without remedy.

That's an awakening Scripture, isn't it? I have known people that really got awake when they heard that. And you believe the Word is the sword of the Spirit. And someone says, well, I think we've got all kinds of time.

I don't see any hurry about this. Well, perhaps we should discuss this and think about it for a moment. There is that verse, so and so and such and such, that says he that being often reprov'd hardens his neck shall suddenly be destroyed.

That without remedy. Well, where's that? Oh, right here. I never saw that before.

Now you've got a Scripture, but you're focusing on their need. Don't talk to them about being saved. It's all part of it.

Put the Scripture there that's going to have the effect of bringing them to a state of alertness. Or that young preacher that had a beautiful guitar with one string. Oh, the churches that suffered through us.

Boys, I remember when the only sermon I had when I first was called was John 3.16. I got a lot out of it. This young preacher had friends who were visiting from the city and one man who prided himself on being an agnostic. And the young preacher didn't have much of a sermon, but he did have a great text.

And his text was, It is appointed unto men to die and after death to judge. So when he couldn't think of anything else to say, he'd repeat the text. It is appointed unto men to die and after death to judge.

So maybe a dozen, fifteen times in the sermon, he ran out of things to say, so he just repeated the text. And at the door, people were going by. They were very parsimonious.

They weren't very generous at all. I couldn't say that other word. With their compliments.

And this man had driven up from the city. He said, Young man, if I were you, I'd look around for another word. That's the worst sermon I ever heard.

He said, I agree with you, but I want one thing clear. It's appointed unto men to die and after death to judge. And that's part of the thing that made it so bad.

You're just harping on that text. Why? Well, because it's appointed unto men to die and after death to judge. Well, I'll never come back and hear you.

Well, that's all the more reason. You better remember, dear friend, that it's appointed unto men to die and after death to judge. About three o'clock in the morning, that fellow was staying with friends down there.

Got up, went to the host, said, Where's that young preacher? He said, He's over here at such and such. He said, You give me directions because I've got to talk to him. So about a quarter to four, he arrived where the preacher lived, knocked on the door, and said, Preacher! I still think you're the poorest preacher I ever heard, but I can't get away from that text.

You've got to help me find out what I do about it. Because if you know it's appointed unto men to die and after death to judge, you know how I can get ready for that judgment. But I don't want you to think you're a better preacher than you are.

That's the point. Awakening. And then conviction.

By the law is the knowledge of sin. The law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. And once you're awakened, you have to take them to the law, to the Ten Commandments, to the Scripture, till they understand what sin is.

Sin is ungodliness. And what's ungodliness? Sin is living as if there is no God. A sovereign choice of the human spirit to govern itself as if God didn't exist.

I'll do what I want to do. They've got to understand it. Because they've got to repent.

And they've got to change their mind about something. And what they've got to change their mind about is the thing they've changed their mind to. One time they said, I'm going to do what I want to do.

Now they've got to undo that. And so they have to change. Hey, I've got five minutes over.

Father, we thank and praise You for this privilege we have of thinking and studying together. And we ask You that somehow the truth will take a hold of us. And in the days and weeks that lie around before us, we're going to just let Thee do Thy work in Thy way.

And we'll have the joy of seeing all those that Thou in Thy grace. Lord, we're not going to keep numbers. We just want to have the joy that some, someday, we'll be able to thank You that You let us come into their lives so that we could faithfully witness to them of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, Lord, bless us. We think about what we've studied. And we give these thanks in Jesus' worthy name.

Amen.

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