

***SAVED FOR CHRIST***

**Titus 2:11-15**

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The title of this sermon is “Saved For Christ.”

The Bible teaches that we are **not** saved by good works, but by grace through faith (see Eph. 2:8). In other words, we are not saved from hell by earning our way to heaven through being good. Instead, salvation is a free gift, and we receive it through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ for our sins.

But this wonderful truth has led many to conclude that if we don't have to earn our way to heaven through good works, then we don't have to be good. If God doesn't save us based on our performance, then we can simply believe in Jesus to escape hell, but then live our lives however we please. If salvation is not earned, if it is a free gift that we receive by faith, then we can just sin all we want.

But that's a gross misinterpretation of the Bible. And that's what I want to show you today.

I want to answer this question: **If salvation is a free gift, then can we do whatever we want? If salvation not based on our performance, then can we continue in sin?**

Turn with me to **Titus 2:11-15 (CSB)**.

Let's start with **verses 11-13**.

“11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

In verse eleven and twelve Paul presents two truths that don't seem to logically fit.

First in verse 11 Paul says that "the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people."

In other words, God sent Jesus to save sinners, and this was all an act of grace. The word grace is *charis*; it means a free gift. Salvation is a free gift. We don't have to earn it. We don't deserve it. It is given to us as a free gift.

This is made clear in other passages like Ephesians 2:8-9. "8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— 9 not from works, so that no one can boast." Salvation is a free gift. And the way we receive it through faith – through believing in the death of Christ in our place for our sins.

Titus 3:4-5 says something very similar. "4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, 5 he saved us— not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy."

In this passage Paul doesn't use the word grace, he uses the word mercy. I've heard it said that grace and mercy are two sides of the same coin. Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve – salvation from sin, salvation from hell, salvation from the devil. And Mercy is God not giving you what you deserve – eternal separation from God in hell.

Salvation is by grace and mercy. It is a gift. It is free. It is undeserved. The only thing we need to do to be saved to us put our faith in Jesus Christ.

But then look at verse 12. "Instructing us to deny godliness and worldly lusts and live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age."

So on the one hand, salvation is a free gift. We don't deserve it. We can't work for it. It's free.

But on the other hand, we are instructed to turn from sin and live for God.

Let's take a minute to explain each of these words.

It says we are to "deny" godlessness and worldly lusts.

The word **"deny"** means to denounce, disown, reject.

**Godlessness** means sin.

**Worldly lusts** are sinful pleasures – activities that feel good, but are off limits for God's people. So as Christians we are to deny sin, even if it's fun; even if it feels good.

Then it says that we are to live in a "sensible, righteous, and godly way."

The word **"sensible"** means wise. Make wise choices.

**"Righteous"** means innocent of evil.

And **"godly"** means to have a devoted relationship with God that leads to a life that is pleasing to Him.

So when you put all of verse fourteen together, we are instructed, or taught to deny/reject/disown/denounce all sin, even if it is pleasurable. And on the other hand we are to be godly – to have a devoted relationship with God that leads to a life that is pleasing to Him.

So let's put verses 11-12 together.

On the one hand, salvation is a free gift. It is undeserved and unearned. All we have to do is put our faith in Jesus.

But that doesn't mean that we can just go on sinning, because the very next verse, verse 12, instructs us to deny sin and be godly.

So this answers this question we started with.

If salvation is a free gift, can we do whatever we want? Nope. We are called to deny sin and be godly.

But that brings up another question. Why?

If salvation is a free gift, then why can't we do whatever we want? Why should we pursue godliness?

That brings us to **verse 14**. "He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession, eager to do good works."

This verse is talking about Christ.

He (Christ) gave Himself to redeem us (to set us free) from all lawlessness (sin; wickedness) and to cleanse for Himself a people for His own possession, eager to do good works.

Why did Jesus die on the cross?

To save us from our sins, right? That's the standard answer.

But usually what we mean by that is that Jesus died to save us from the punishment for sin.

Because of sin, we deserve the wrath of God, which is eternal separation from God in hell. And Jesus died to save us from sin's punishment. That's true.

**John 3:16**, for example, says, "For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." Christ came to save us from perishing in hell.

But there's more to salvation than that.

Titus 2:14 says that Jesus died not only to save us from sin, but to save us for Himself.

It says Christ died to accomplish 4 things.

### **Christ Died to Accomplish Four Things**

**First, Christ died to redeem us from all lawlessness.**

He came to set us free from the power of sin.

Before we are saved, we are enslaved to sin. We have a sin nature that we inherited from Adam, which means that our natural inclination is to sin. We cannot help it. That's who we are. We are enslaved to sin; under sin's dominion.

But when Christ saves us, He sets us free from the power of sin so that we are willing and able to do God's will.

This is called regeneration.

When God saves us, He gives us a new heart with the desire and power to please Him.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!”

So first it says that Christ died to set us free from the power of sin so that we have the desire and power to do God’s will.

**Second, Christ died to cleanse us from sin.**

This is called sanctification.

When God saves us, the Holy Spirit immediately indwells us, and He begins the lifelong process of growing us more and more like Christ.

**1 Peter 1:14-15** says, “14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. 15 But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct.”

The word holy means morally blameless. Totally clean from sin.

So second, Christ died to cleanse us from sin. Not only did He die to give us the power and the desire to overcome sin, but He died so that we would indeed gradually become clean from all sin.

**Third, Christ died to make us His own possession, living for Him.**

Before salvation, we didn’t belong to Christ.

We lived like we were in charge. We did whatever we wanted.

But Christ died so that we would be His possession.

So that He would be the owner, and we would be His property.

So that He would be the Master, and we would be His slaves.

So that He would have full and total control over us.

So that He could have us all to Himself, and He wouldn't have to share us.

In other words, Christ died so that we would live for Him.

**2 Corinthians 5:15** says, "And he died for all so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for the one who died for them and was raised."

So Christ died to set us free from the power of sin.

Second, Christ died to cleanse us from sin and to make us holy, or morally blameless like Christ.

And third, Christ died to make us His own possession, living for Him rather than for ourselves.

**And then fourth, Christ died to make us eager to do good works.**

In other words, Christ died so that we would serve Him; not merely avoid moral evil, but actually serve His purposes.

He died so that we would discover what He is up to in the world, and then let Him work through us to accomplish His mission.

When you put all of verse 14 together, it means that **Christ died not merely to save us from sin, but for Himself.**

He died not merely to save us from sin's punishment, but for His use; His glory; His honor; His pleasure.

And so let's go back to our questions.

**First, if salvation is a free gift, then can we do whatever we want?**

Absolutely not. Titus 2:12 makes it clear that we are instructed to deny sin and live a godly life.

**But that leads to the second question. If salvation is a free gift, then why should we deny sin and live a godly life?**

Why not just do what feels good? Why does the Bible command us to turn from sin and live a godly life?

The answer to that is in verse 12.

Jesus died not only to save us from the punishment for sin, but to save us for Himself.

He died not just so that we would live forever, but so that we would live for Him.

Not just so that would go to heaven, but so that we would live for Him while we are still on earth.

This truth has **three applications.**

**1. We are not saved by good works, but we are saved to do good works.**

Let's be very clear. We do not deny sin and pursue godliness and live for Christ in order to earn our way to heaven.

Some people think that the way salvation works is that God measures your good deeds and your bad deeds, and if you have more good deeds than bad deeds then He lets you in to heaven when you die. That's not how justice works.

Think about what happens in a court of law when a man is guilty of murder. The judge doesn't say, "You are guilty of murder, but because you have only



committed murder once, and you have done 1,000 good deeds, we're not going to punish you." It doesn't matter how many good deeds the murderer has done, he is still guilty of murder and deserves to be punished. That's way it is with us and God. Even though you may have done many good things in life, you have also sinned against God many times, and those sins need to be punished. And the punishment for sin is hell. So there's no way you can earn your way out of hell and into heaven. If any of us got what we deserved, it would be hell.

That's why the only way that we could be saved is if salvation was a free gift; something that didn't have to be earned. Because if it had to be earned, nobody would make it.

I heard someone say, "Good people don't go to heaven; forgiven people do."

Why don't good people go to heaven? Because there are none. We are all sinners in need of a Savior.

So salvation is a free gift. We are not saved by good works. We are saved by putting our faith in the sacrifice of Christ for our sins.

But while we are not saved by good works, we are saved to do good works.

Good works don't produce salvation; they are the result of salvation. They are the product of salvation.

**Ephesians 2:8-10** puts these two truths side by side. "8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— 9 not from works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do."

So on the one hand we are saved by grace (free gift) through faith (through relying on the work of Christ on the cross for our sins).

But then verse 10 says we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.

So we are not saved by good works, but we are saved to do good works.

We are saved by grace, to serve God.

## **2. A Christian is not merely heaven-bound, but godly on earth.**

Remember, Christ did not merely die to save us from hell. He died to save us for Himself. He died so that we would deny sin and live a godly life – a devoted relationship with God resulting in a life that is pleasing to Him.

Christianity is not merely a destination. It is a lifestyle. It is not merely the way to heaven. It is the way to live.

Jesus said in **John 14:6**, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Jesus is the way to heaven. The way to forgiveness. The way to salvation.  
The way to eternal life. The way to reconciliation with God.

But He is also the life – He wants us to live our lives in service to Him.

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** says, “19 Don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body.”

Paul writes that **your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.** When you get saved, the Holy Spirit indwells you and lives inside of you.

And then it says that **you are not your own, for you were bought with a price.** Again, the is reiterating the point that Christ died not merely to save you from hell, but to save you for Himself. As a Christian, you belong to Him; You are God’s property.

And then it says, **so glorify God with your body.** Since you were saved for Christ, live for Him. Glorify Him.

**To glorify Him means to show how great God is through your actions.** It means to **display the superiority of life in Christ.**

**3. If you are not pursuing godliness, then you are not saved.**

Let's conclude this sermon with a very difficult truth.

If we are saved for good works; if Christianity is not merely about being heaven-bound, but godly on earth, then you aren't a Christian if you are not pursuing godliness – a devoted relationship with God resulting in a life that is pleasing to Him.

Think about it like this.

Christ died to save us from hell. Therefore, a person who goes to hell is not saved.

Christ also died to save us for Himself. Therefore, a person who is not living a life of devotion to Christ is not saved.

In other words, if your religion is about agreeing with a set of doctrines and not a life of full devotion to Jesus Christ – repenting of sin, striving to grow in holiness, looking for ways to serve the Lord with all your resources – then you have a false religion. It's not Christianity.

## **CONCLUSION**

Salvation is a free gift.

But that doesn't mean we can do whatever we want.

The Bible calls us to deny sin and pursue godliness.

Why? Because that's why Christ saved us. **Christ died not to save us only from hell, but to save us for Himself.**

And so let me ask you some serious questions.

Are you living for Christ, or are you merely believing in Him so you don't go to hell?

Are you living for Christ, or are you living for yourself?

Are you living for Christ, or are you living in sin?

If you have not committed your life to Jesus Christ, to live for Him, then you are not saved.

And today I want to challenge you to make a commitment right now to turn from yourself, turn from sin, turn from everything, and embrace Christ. Ask Christ to come into your life and save you, not just from sin, but for Himself. For His use; for His glory.