

FOCUS ON JESUS

Part 3 of ADVENT 2023. Titus 2:11-14.

Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. December 17, 2023.

SHARPENING OUR FOCUS

The essential things in the Christian faith can get blurry.

- Advent aims to sharpen our focus on Jesus.
- We make Jesus the focus in church so we'll make him the focus in life.

TITUS 2:11-14

The apostle Paul wrote to his co-worker Titus with instructions for organizing the church on the Mediterranean island of Crete.

- He instructed Titus on ways to live as a Christ-follower - Titus 2:1-10.
- He explained to Titus why to live as a Christ-follower - Titus 2:11-14.

Titus 2:11-14 (ESV) For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

FOCAL POINTS TO SHARPEN OUR FOCUS ON JESUS

Focal Point One: God's "Saving" Grace - verse 11.

- The "grace of God" is his loving intervention to help us.
- The grace "appeared." This refers to Jesus. See Luke 1:79.
- The grace brings "salvation." Only Jesus can rescue us from ...
- The salvation is for all people. Not everyone will receive it.

God's saving grace is found in Jesus. Only Jesus. So what?

- Stop trying to save yourself. Trust in Jesus.

Focal Point Two: God's "Training" Grace - verses 12 and 14.

- Our need for grace doesn't end at the moment of conversion.
- Jesus is like a tutor or coach training us for a new lifestyle.
- Jesus is present and powerfully working on every believer's mind and will. So, we hate our sins and love God.

Jesus prepares us to live a godly lifestyle. So what?

- Don't live like godless people. Live like God's people. See verse 14.
- Live for the glory of God in everything you think and do.

Focal Point Three: God's "Waiting" Grace - verse 13.

- God's saving and training grace results in "waiting" for Jesus to return.
- The Greek word for waiting means to look forward to something.
- We're looking forward to Jesus because his return is "blessed."
- It's blessed because Jesus will return in "glory" - radiating God's being.
- It's blessed because Jesus is our "great God."

There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal most just and terrible in His judgments; hating all sin; and who will by no means

clear the guilty (Westminster Confession of Faith. 1648. Chapter 2. Paragraph 1. <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/westminster-confession-faith>).

When Jesus returns, we'll see God So what?

- Live like we may see God today.

Ephesians 5:15-17 (ESV) Look carefully then how you walk (conduct yourself), not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

- Live “carefully” - intentionally, with the end in mind.
- Live “wisely” - in the fear (holy reverence) of God.
- Live according to the “will of the Lord.” Submit to his will and ways.
- Ask: “Am I ready to meet God?”

A FINAL WORD

Advent helps us sharpen our focus on Jesus:

Jesus is God with us, God saving us, God training us, and God coming again to save us.

Let's pray.

Eternal God, you sent your eternal Son to pierce the world's darkness with the light of salvation: may he return soon to bring his glory, salvation, and peace to all his waiting people. We pray in the Name of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen!

SMALL GROUPS GUIDE

GET STARTED

- Name your favorite Christmas songs. Share seasonal playlists.

DIVE IN

- Review the study guide. What were Peter's main ideas, insights, or Bible passages related to steadfastness?
- In light of Titus 2:12, discuss the need for saving grace. Discuss who is excluded from saving grace - the offer of salvation in Christ. Use 1 Timothy 2:3-6 and Revelation 22:17b to stimulate the conversation.
- Some people claim that sanctified or godly living is optional for people who claim Jesus as their Savior. Discuss this in light of Titus 2:13. Consider 2 Peter 3:11-12 during your discussion.
- Reading multiple passages on the return of Christ can fuel our anticipation and impact our lives. So ... read several of the following passages in your group: Matthew 24:29-31; 25:1-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12; Hebrews 9:28; 2 Peter 3:8-13; Revelation 19:11-16.

MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU

- Spend some time in silence as you surrender your life to Jesus, the glorious God who saves, who is in us, and who is coming again for us.

PRAY TOGETHER

Pray for the members of the small group, your pastors/elders, the Cornerstone family, and our outreach partners. And anything else the Lord puts on your mind.