

Titus 2: Hope for all...but especially for believers

1 Timothy 4:10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, especially of those who believe.

4:11 Command and teach these things.

I could have equally called this sermon: Christmas for all...but especially for believers

Titus and Timothy are leaders of churches and Paul is effectively their mentor.

The Letters are written to help these men become good leaders in the church

The ideas and themes are repeated and the reading from timothy on the power point is saying the same thing as the reading from Titus.

We are not talking about hope for nice day but rather Hope for Salvation. Hope of Salvation is the helmet in the Spiritual armour and helmets keep the head safe. There are only two parts of the Armour that are essential to protect life and vital organs [the breast plate and the helmet].

Wearing a helmet gives certainty.

The great challenge to Hope is uncertainty, but the great challenge to uncertainty is Hope.

The key points from this passage which are also contained in today's reading are:

1/ Jesus is the Hope for all mankind [the message of Hope]

2/ believers must strive to live holy lives [the purpose of Hope]

3/ And believers are especially precious to God [the future of Hope or certainty of Hope]

Passage for today

Titus 2:11 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,*

2:12 *teaching us that having denied ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live discreetly, righteously and godly, in this present world,*

2:13 *looking for the blessed hope, and the appearance of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,*

2:14 *who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify to Himself a special people, zealous of good works.*

2:15 *Speak these things, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.*

Although the Hope is for all men to see in verse 11 it is clear by verse 14 that the only way to be sure of our Hope is to cooperate with God's plan and thereby we will see that we are members of God's special people.

Please note you don't do these things to become God's special people, but because you are God's Special people.

The chapter ends with Paul charging Titus to stand firm in these teachings and not allow anyone to despise him. Again this was not literally possible as many would have found these teachings very strict and despised Titus because of it. Paul is really saying "speak the truth in love" this way you can only give cause for offense to people who dislike the Truth.

Jesus is quite clear that it is expected that if you speak truthfully you will offend people. Most of the Old Testament Prophets and the New Testament Apostles suffered or died because people did not like what they were saying.

When we are too worried about offending people that we go out of our way to avoid speaking truthfully or honestly, we are not only compromising our integrity but we are also failing to follow the example of those who walked in faith before us. I worry that the modern church is so chummy

with the world that the world doesn't see that the church has anything to offer. Paul stresses the importance of this Authority drawn from God's word.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

- It is not offered to anyone
- It appears to everyone who has heard about Christ, but not everyone sees it with uncovered eyes.
- Even the addition of the word "brings" is questionable
- A more accurate rendering might read

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God, which salvation, has shone upon all men,

Now let me make it very clear what the passage does not say:

1/ It does not say everyone goes to heaven [Paul Reet quite correctly said the Bible, especially the Words of Jesus, indicate that Universal salvation is wrong] No matter how much I want it to say that all people are saved [because I sympathise with sinners] when we look at what Christ said in the Gospel it is evident that my feelings do not line up with Jesus teaching.

When it says in 1 Timothy 4:10 he is "the saviour of all people" it is because the message must go to all people. God in his love and mercy allows a general grace and kindness to be extended to all people. The Command is that we are to extend the Hope of Christ to all; that is evangelism. But the "Specially" part of the verse indicates those who will receive the full benefits of the Hope of Salvation – those who believe.

2/ It does not say no one is saved unless they accept the offer. In the NIV the first verse is translated somewhat differently than above and the word "Offer" is added does not appear in the Greek.

God does not offer salvation to all men, if he did then no-one could be said to be saved by God they would in fact be saved by making good decisions.

As far as I am aware he does not offer salvation to any men or women.

He simply saves people.

So if this verse is not saying that all men are saved and it is not saying that God offers salvation to all men what is it saying?

It is saying the Hope of Salvation exists for all men and women in general because Christ became a man and took the divine punishment for sin for those who believe.

Consider the context: those who know Christ move on to live godly lives; they are a special people to God.

They deny ungodliness and worldly lust

Therefore those who deny godliness and embrace worldly lust must be considered normal rather than special or peculiar as other versions translate the word.

Beware of that hope which looks bright in the dark, but loses all its lustre when it is set in the light of God's word, when it is examined and tried by the touchstone of divine revelation.

*From **Human Nature in its Fourfold State** by Thomas Boston*

If you doubt anything I am saying then please let's talk.

If you feel something I have said is not right we need to talk to get to the truth, but don't make the mistake of ignoring your feelings or the mistake of trusting them alone to have the final say.

My job as a minister of the Word is to expose you to the Word. Your job as students of the word is to meditate on and either challenge, or be challenged by, what you have been exposed to.

The message of Hope

Epiphany

- Translated as *appeared*
- Literally “to shine on”
- Like the Sun
- For all men
- Hearing the Word
- About Jesus mission
- Gives hope
- Jesus came to earth

Apocalypse

- Translated as *revealed*
- Literally “remove the veil”
- Like curtain being pulled
- For believers
- Comprehending the Word
- About who Jesus is
- Gives faith /belief
- Jesus comes to your heart

The word epiphany is associated with Christmas; the first coming of Christ. It is specifically associated with the star that led the wise men [Magi] to where he lay.

The Word apocalypse is associated with Jesus second coming, but its’ real meaning is revealing. This Passage indicates that all receive an epiphany – the Gospel light shines on all men in some way Perhaps it is simply that Jesus came to earth and God became a man, perhaps it is that Gentiles can become Christians and they don’t have to become Jews first. Perhaps at a subconscious level all men know God exists and that they need for his forgiveness. Whatever the case the bells sound out; it is Christmas and the wise men follow the shining star to Jesus. It is vital head knowledge for a person who is to be saved, but alas it is not enough to change a person’s life or make a follower out of them. What is needed for that is not information from without, but rather transformation from within. A change of heart is an Apocalypse.

Evidently not all people receive such a revelation from God in this way as not all people follow Jesus. Certainly not all people go on to attempt to live like the passage says Gods special people will. True conversion and complete eternal salvation requires both an epiphany and an apocalypse. Consider Jesus disciples; many they saw him perform miracles and heal people and cast out demons. We even heard recently how he calmed a storm with his words. Every time the disciples saw this they were experiencing an epiphany. God was demonstrating who he was to them and they were looking straight at it. It was having an extreme influence on their souls. MIND WILL AND EMOTION. But it was not enough to stop many of them from falling away from following Jesus when the times got tough. When Jesus asked the 12 “are you going to leave me also?” peter “replies where can we go you have the words of eternal life” When Jesus asks the twelve “whom do you say that I am?” peter answers “you are the Christ, the son of the living God” Jesus replies

Mat 16:17 ... "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Mat 16:18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Simon is the first person Jesus credits with experiencing revelation [the word apocalypse is used]. The verse does not mean it is Peter who is the foundation stone of the kingdom but the revelation experience is the foundation.

There is a fundamental difference in wanting to follow Jesus because he has done great things and wanting to follow Jesus because it has been revealed to you that anything other than following Jesus in life is pointless.

The other obvious example I can give biblically of this subtle difference between epiphany and apocalypse is that of Saul of Tarsus

If you recall: On the way to Damascus to arrest the Christians, Jesus appears to Saul as a bright light saying "Saul why do you persecute me"

Paul [recognising divine authority] asks "who are you?"

"Jesus whom you persecute" is the reply.

The brightness of this epiphany blinded Paul and he lost his sight.

People often call this the moment of his conversion but it was not until three days later that Paul had his revelation

The Apocalypse for Paul was literally when the scales fell off his eyes.

And it was part of a greater plan for Paul to do good works

When God asks a Christian in Damascus to pray for Saul listen to what happens.

Act 9:13 And Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints at Jerusalem.

Act 9:14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your Name.

Act 9:15 But the Lord said to him, Go! For this one is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before nations and kings and the sons of Israel.

Act 9:16 For I will show him what great things he must suffer for My name's sake.

Act 9:17 And Ananias went and entered into the house. And putting his hands on him, *he said, Brother Saul, the Lord, Jesus, who appeared to you in the way in which you came, has sent me to you that you might see and be filled with the Holy Spirit.*

Act 9:18 And instantly scales as it were fell from his eyes, and he instantly saw again. And rising up, he was baptized.

The gospel casts out a rope to hale sinners to land; but the sinner has no hands to lay hold on it; his very faith must be wrought in him by the Spirit

Thomas Boston

The purpose of Hope

Now next year I have prepared a series of homegroup studies on the 10 commandments

As you look at each commandment you should know that they are impossible to keep by your own human effort

The commandments only serve two purposes if you don't have the Holy Spirit

1- they show us the perfect nature of God

2- they show us how far from perfection we are, revealing our guilt

But with the Holy Spirit of God living in you, a desire to keep the commandments will grow from within you. You can learn them in your head and keep them from your heart.

The same Holy Spirit that gives the believer the revelation [apocalypse] of Jesus, is at work within the believer to change them for the better.

The purpose of God is always to make his people more Holy

His purpose is his Glory and it must be our purpose as believers as well.

Beware of that hope of heaven, which does not prepare and dispose you for heaven, which never makes your soul more holy

Thomas Boston

The Future of Hope

Hope affects how we live

Nobody really lives without hope

Even so called atheists live with hope. It does not make any logical sense to me but they do live with hope- while they are young at least. The sun shines, the birds sing- we find things we can do and enjoy, and set goals and work toward them, but if we live this way eventually we have our last good day, we get too sick or too old or our mind gets muddled and then we are reduced to simply waiting for death.

Sorry to wreck your morning but the fact of the matter is that if we hope in the wrong things or have false hope we end up worse off than if we had no hope to start with. Some people say it is better to have had some good and lose it than no good in our lives, but again in the long run doesn't that just mean we will spend longer morning over what we have lost. Of course it does.

Read Ecclesiastes **6:3** **If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he.**

That is why the only real hope is found in the eternal hope of life with Jesus Christ. Build your house on a strong foundation. Find your satisfaction in that which cannot disappoint you.

What or who do you place your hope in?

The presumptuous hopes of the ungodly, in their death, cannot make their state hopeful; neither can the fears of a saint make his state hopeless—for God judges according to the truth of the thing, not according to men's opinions about it. Therefore the saints can be no more altogether without hope, than they can be altogether without faith.

Thomas Boston

Conclusion

1. Don't use this passage out of context to make out it says everyone is saved
2. Use this passage as an encouragement to tell the story of Jesus to all people so that many who hear it may be saved. We can't bring revelation to people but we can share the stories of revelations and epiphanies in our life and from the Bible. When we do this we are shining the light of Christ onto others [creating Epiphanies is not beyond our ability.]
3. Remember the purpose of God [above all things he is HOLY]. Don't make hope about getting things from God to make us happy. Present it as Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth toward men. Remember all people deep down know they need God's forgiveness. Tell the truth in a loving way.

Although the Spirit of God must work apart from our efforts to give us spiritual life, we are not to be passive recipients of God's grace after we have trusted in Christ by faith alone. The new birth begins a lifelong process of sanctification in which we cooperate with the Holy Spirit to mortify sin, do good, and serve God. We properly wait for Jesus' return by doing His will, not by sitting on our hands and wishing for an escape from this fallen world.

RC Sproul