

The Life-Changing Power of the Gospel ~ Titus 2:11-14

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on August 17, 2008

www.goldcountrybaptist.org

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

These four verses have been called:

“one of the great summaries of Christian truth” (Homer Kent)

“the core of what Titus was to teach ... the great message” (Mark Dever)

“one of the richest passages of Holy Writ” (William Hendriksen)

“one of the gems of the New Testament” (Gary Demarest)

“Paul’s masterly epitome of Christian doctrine as the proper foundation for [all Scriptural] demands” (D. Edmund Hiebert)

Philip Towner writes: ‘This section is a densely packed statement of theology that ... marks the rhetorical high point of the letter. Owing to the shift in grammar and the elevated language, the reader or hearer will know instinctively that this section is crucial to Paul’s discourse for several reasons ... the theological passage provides the foundation for the ethical teaching that has just been laid down (2:1-10). Only now what has been prescribed is to be seen clearly as an outworking of grace, linked intrinsically to the death of Christ and the new way of life associated with that event ... Christian theology is [the only way] to explain the power, character, and origin of this way of life.’¹

The glorious message of the gospel in these four verses can be summarized in four words.

- Four words that set Christianity apart from all other claims and cults and religions.
- Four truths we need to remember and seek to make clear when we are explaining the gospel to others
- Four words that explain how verses 9-10 were possible, how slaves living in horrible conditions in the Roman Empire could glorify God and beautify His Son to others
- Four words that had transformed the most pagan sinners into saints on the island of Crete, those who were formerly always liars, lazy gluttons, evil beasts (1:12).
- Four words, each of which could change your life (if they haven’t already) and if they have, they should continue to make an impact in your life even if you’re already familiar with them – I pray they will impact us afresh today.
- Four words and the truths behind them that should be meditated on by us every day of our life to sustain us for whatever God calls us to today, and in the days to come.
- Any one of these four words by itself we could spend many weeks studying and would barely scratch the surface, but as we briefly look at them, may God write each of these truths more deeply on our hearts today and cause us to be again reminded by and refreshed by their life-changing power.

The four words will be our outline today: Grace – Repentance – Christ - Cross

Grace (v. 11) – past tense

Repentance (v. 12) – present tense ongoing lifestyle

Christ (v. 13) – future-oriented hope in Him

The Cross (v. 14) – past, present, and future culmination altogether

GRACE

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

The “all men” of verse 11 (as I mentioned last time) does not mean all men will be saved. In context (v. 1-10), God’s grace saves all *types* of men, all classes of humanity, every race and state of life, even slaves mentioned two verses earlier in verse 9. And certainly it would include the women of verses 3-5, and young and old, and Jew and Gentile – there is no tribe or tongue or type of person that God’s grace is not for. There is a *common grace* Scripture speaks of and a *general call* to all, and there is also a particular grace or effectual grace and call at the moment of salvation for the redeemed people of God (v. 14). From the human side, saving grace is reserved for those who respond and repent as v. 12 describes, who are trusting in Christ as God and Savior as v. 13 says, and who are not relying on what they have done but only what Christ has done for them as v. 14 says.

And verse 14 also tells us that salvation is ultimately all of God, by God, for God, through God Himself for Himself – God’s election, God’s redemption, God’s possession. *What we do* doesn’t cause our salvation; rather it is God’s salvation that causes good works we do in response to the power of the life-changing gospel.

A prime illustration of Titus 2:11 would be on the day of Pentecost, where in unprecedented ways God’s grace appeared, bringing salvation to all types of men. Even, as Acts 2 says “both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs ... hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God” (v. 10-11).

Some from Arab territories saw the grace of God bringing salvation to them on that day. Of the 3000 saved in Acts 2, some Cretans may have traveled all the way back home with the gospel.

When verse 11 says God’s grace appeared, it’s referring to God’s grace in Jesus Christ, beginning with His incarnation and life on earth, later expanding through the book of Acts as Christ is preached to all men, from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. And this process is still continuing to our day – you don’t hear about it on the news as much, but Jews in greater numbers are turning to Christ and declaring the mighty deeds of God, and Arabs as well.

Just this week I read of a young man who is causing quite a stir. He may be the most well-known Muslim who has publicly professed his faith in Christ. He chose to do it through the Israeli media, meeting with a Jewish reporter, as captured in the cover story of their magazine *HA ARETZ* published August 1, 2008 in Israel. He is the son of one of the founders of Hamas, the terrorist organization. The Israeli paper cover reads: “Masab Yousef, son of a West Bank Hamas leader, has forsaken his father’s ideology, converted to Christianity and is now seeking political asylum in the U.S.” He now lives in the San Diego area (where it’s understandably safer for him, for his life) and footage of his profession of faith has appeared on FOX News, plus interviews with other reporters.

His father is the well-known Sheik Hassan Yousef, an influential political figure in Palestinian parliament who has been imprisoned by Israel numerous times. On one of those imprisonments years ago as Masab Yousef, this son, got to know the other top Hamas leaders more closely, he began to see the wicked fruit of their religion in how they lived and the emptiness of Islam. In contrast, a Christian young man UK invited him to a Bible study in Jerusalem, having no idea who this young Muslim was, and over 4 years time, the grace of God began to appear to Yousef as he curiously studied the scriptures with these who lived differently and studied a Messiah who taught quite differently than the Koran.

According to one reporter, this process where his eyes were opened to the falsehood of Islam was his *epiphany*, interestingly that's the root Greek word in Titus 2:11 for "appearing" of grace.

As the verse says, God's grace in Christ to all men appeared, and it began in the 1st century (bringing salvation to Roman soldiers, slaves, a thief on a cross, Gentile women, even formerly self-righteous Jewish priests, and Pharisees, and rabbis like Saul who became the Paul who writes to Titus). Now in the 21st century all types of men include a son of a group involved in terrorism against Israel (who like Paul has also changed his name; Yousef to Joseph)

That's a vivid picture of the life-changing power of the gospel of the grace that has appeared in Jesus, bringing salvation to all men.

Pray for Yousef (Joseph), that God's grace will sustain him in the difficult days ahead and will use him to bring salvation to all types of men, even those who hate and want to annihilate the Jews. In one of his interviews, Joseph said he was struck by Christ's command of grace to love your enemies because it was so different than the life he saw in his people. God's grace has changed his heart, and he told one interviewer he would like to marry some day, and of course it would have to be a Christian girl, and he said if it was a Jewish convert to Christianity, that would be even better.

God's grace is the only explanation for such a transformed life, and that is Paul's point in Titus 2:10, that we should live such lives before a watching world that will adorn or make beautiful God our Savior and will make His glorious gospel believable (v. 11-14).

How do we do that? It's not only based on a one-time work of God's grace in the past, it also requires our ongoing repentance. This brings us to the 2nd of these 4 words that sum up the gospel:

REPENTANCE

¹² **instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,**

We are commanded to continually *deny* ungodliness and worldly desires, and other translations use the word "reject" (NET) or "renounce" (ESV). We turn from those ways, and instead we are to live the opposite in the present. Turning from these ways to the ways God calls us to, is summed up in the biblical word repentance

Israel Today is a Jerusalem-based news agency that actually used this word “repent” in its opening sentence on this story where it says Yousef ‘has converted to Christianity and **repented of his sins** for being an active part of a culture of hate and death that targeted’ Israel. It’s fitting that Yousef has changed his name to Joseph, who is a great OT example of forgiveness and grace.

It might be helpful for a moment to define these terms and the relationship between grace and repentance. **Grace** is the rich word for God’s unmerited, undeserved, unearned favor or kindness toward sinners who not only did not deserve it, but who deserved the exact opposite. It’s His greatest mercy for those who deserved His greatest punishment (all of us who have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God). God’s sovereign grace is the only explanation for how Masab Joseph could be saved, and it’s the only explanation for how any of us in this room could be saved. Any conversion is a miraculous mighty work by God that is all of God and God alone and not based on anything man is or does. Saving grace takes place at a moment in time and cannot be added to.

Repentance, on the other hand, involves man’s response, begins when we follow Christ, and is to continue throughout Christian life. Repentance is the changing of sinful ways and thoughts, turning from our sins to follow godliness, confessing of sins.

Even our repentance, though, is a gift that God grants, not something we do on our own. God gets all the glory for it all:

Acts 5:31 (NASB95) ³¹ “[**Jesus**] is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant **repentance** to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Acts 11:18 ‘When they heard this, they ... **glorified God**, saying, “Well then, **God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.**”

2 Timothy 2:25-26 (NASB95) ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps **God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,** ²⁶ and they may come to their senses *and escape* from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

I think our brother Joseph would agree that is truly the description of those caught up in Islam’s snare of the devil - they are captives needing the enlightening effectual grace of Jesus to come to the knowledge of God and to repent and receive forgiveness.

2 Corinthians 4:4-6 would agree when it says our spiritual enemy “has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God ... **God**, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” **is the One who has shone in our hearts** to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

God does it this way so that He gets the glory, not us. Yousef said to a reporter he hopes to be used by God to "open the eyes" of Muslims and "reveal the truth" to them about Islam and Christianity that God might "take them **out of the darkness and the prison of Islam.**" ... Yousef, who has taken the biblical name of Joseph, said he dreams of one day of God using him to become a writer to tell his personal story and testimony.

Joseph also dreams that someday he can see his family again and that they will accept Jesus Christ. "I know that I'm endangering my life and am even liable to lose my father, but I hope that he'll understand this and that **God will give him and my family patience and willingness to open their eyes to Jesus** and to Christianity."

Verse 12 tells us how grace works, beginning with the word "instructing" – your translation may have *teaching* or *training*. It's the Greek word we get the English word "pedagogue" from – an instructor or teacher or tutor who helps a young child in school.

In the grammar and language, it is God's grace from verse 11 that has this role of our pedagogue or personal teacher. The imagery is the classroom - it is the school of grace – like any school there is rules. The first two rules: No ungodliness or worldly desires. But our teacher grace not only tells us the rules, it helps us obey them.

It's been pointed out about this schoolmaster of ours: 'A pedagogue leads children step by step. Thus, grace, too, gently leads and guides ... Grace trains by teaching ... chastening ... counseling, comforting, encouraging, admonishing, guiding, convicting, rewarding, restraining, etc ... When grace takes over, the sinner repudiates ungodliness. This repudiation is a definite act, a decision to give up that which is displeasing to God.'²

The second half of the verse says after we repent or renounce ungodly worldly desires, we are also positively "**to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age**"

These 3 adverbs express relationships with self, neighbor, and God
 "sensibly" – self-mastery, self-control
 "righteously" – towards neighbors or others
 "godly" – based on relationship with God

William Mounce writes: 'Not only has God's grace saved believers, but it has the ongoing task of teaching them to live righteously ... This verse, which emphasizes present-day obligations, contrasts with the next verse, which looks forward to the Lord's return. Its basic thrust is repeated in v. 14. The verse deals a death blow to any theology that separates salvation from the demands of obedience to the Lordship of Christ.'³

This brings us to our third word with life-changing gospel power:

CHRIST

¹³ **looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,**

Verse 12 ends with "this present age" which would refer to the age between the first appearing of Christ and His Second Appearing (same Greek root word *epiphany* – sudden arrival or Coming).

- grace in Christ first appeared in the **past** (v. 11, cf. John 1)
- a grace which impacts us in the **present** through a life of continual repentance and sanctification (v. 12)
- and now the **future**-oriented hope in Christ (v. 13)

The return of Christ is something we are to look for, look forward to, long for, and 2 Timothy 4:7 says we must love His appearing. This is the blessed hope believers have according to Titus 2:13.

The early church father Chrysostom wrote: ‘For nothing is more blessed and more desirable than that appearing. Words are not able to represent it, the blessings thereof surpass our understanding,’ exclaims Chrysostom, and on that note he ceases writing.⁴

The early Christians lived in light of the Lord’s return. Do we? Do we think of it?

Masab Joseph did say in one of his interviews here in the States (where he now lives) that although it would be suicidal for him to return to Palestine today, his blessed hope is that "one day I'll be able to return to Palestine and to Ramallah **with Jesus, in the Kingdom of God.**"⁵ I think he means by that, he may not be able to come back to the land in this age, but He looks forward to being there again after Jesus comes back to the land in the next and sets up His kingdom.

That’s pretty good theology for a relatively new believer in Christ, and a pretty remarkable statement from someone who recently wanted to rid that real estate of all Jews and Christians. There will be peace in Palestine some day ... after the Prince of Peace comes back.

But until then, not only is Christ to be our hope in the future, Christ and Christ alone is to be our focus and hope in life and the world.

SBC Baptist Press ran an article on Monday of this week (8/11/08) that wrote how the power of Christ in Joseph’s life ‘that transformed his heart and gives him the courage to publicly declare his faith in Jesus is the only hope for an end to the violence that plagues the Middle East, Joseph said ... The real path to peace in the Middle East, Joseph said, is the same path -- the only path -- a human heart can follow to find deep, lasting peace. "Jesus is not going to give them a political solution, but He has changed me and He can change those people to a better people. He can teach them how to forgive, how to love," Joseph said ... "Now, as it is, there is no hope for them but Jesus. It's that simple."⁶

It is that simple. The gospel is simple, but deeply profound. Simple words – Grace – Repentance – Christ. But when explaining the gospel to unbelievers, you can’t assume they have an accurate definition of these basic words. So how do we define Christ?

The end of Titus 2:13 gives us one of the best concise statements on His deity and nature: “our great **God and Savior** Christ Jesus”

Thomas calls Jesus “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28)

God the Father calls His Son God (Hebrews 1:8)

John calls Him “the Word [who] was with God and was God” (1:1)

And here and in Romans 9:5, Paul refers to Christ as God, which is unfortunately not as clear in the KJV as it is in the modern versions (which have in Romans 9:5 “Christ who is God over all”).

The KJV of Titus 2:13 has “the glorious appearing of **the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ**” (which speaks of two persons appearing; our Savior Jesus and the great God, i.e., the Father)

All the other translations refer to Jesus Christ as “our great God and Savior” which is the correct one for a number of reasons

1. The Granville Sharp rule of Greek grammar has shown that this construction (if both terms are singular, personal, and not proper names) always refers to the same person⁷
2. Nowhere else is this adjective ‘great’ used of God the Father
3. The term ‘epiphany’ is only used of the Son, not God the Father. Nowhere in the NT do we hear of the parousia / coming of the Father
4. ‘God and Savior’ was a title in both Greek and Jewish religious writings of the time referring to a single deity (ex: Ptolemy I, Antiochus Epiphanes, Julius Caesar) – the Christians of first century would use the same title for Christ who alone is the truly the great Savior-God⁸
5. The surrounding language – the Greek words in this passage for ‘grace,’ ‘epiphany,’ ‘great,’ ‘bringing salvation,’ ‘hope’ – is almost set vocabulary for the Imperial cult and numerous other local cults current at the time this letter was written Paul may be refuting⁹
6. The work of redemption and purification is the work of YHWH in the OT, but is clearly attributed to Christ here
7. Paul in Titus freely interchanges reference to God and Savior and Christ as Savior, which only makes place if they are one and the same

Titus 1:3 but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of **God our Savior**,

Titus 1:4 To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ **Jesus our Savior**.

Titus 2:10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of **God our Savior** in every respect.

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and **Savior, Christ Jesus**,

Titus 3:4 But when the kindness of **God our Savior** and His love for mankind appeared ...

Titus 3:6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus **Christ our Savior**,

8. Isaiah 43:10-11 make clear there is no Savior apart from YHWH the LORD

Isaiah 43:10 “You are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me. [v. 11] “I, even I, am the Lord, And **there is no savior besides Me**.

If there is no savior besides YHWH / Jehovah Lord, and Titus 2:13 calls Christ our savior, then Jesus is the one and only LORD

This brings us to the fourth and final key word of the gospel

THE CROSS

our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,¹⁴ **who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.**

God and God alone is the Savior, God and God alone can redeem sinners, and God and God alone can purify His people. Only God the Son could fulfill the perfect requirement of God the Father. As we've seen before, we're saved from God by God through God for God (from His wrath by His grace through His Son for His glory).

Again when explaining the gospel to people, it's not enough to know what a cross is, you need to explain exactly what happened on the cross and what it meant theologically.

This verse says first that Christ "gave Himself for us to redeem us"

First century readers were well familiar with the concept of redemption of slaves (remember v. 9 just mentioned literal slaves).

'Behind the metaphor was the practice of buying a slave's or captive's freedom by the payment of a ransom ... "to redeem" was used widely in the biblical tradition of the action taken by YHWH to set his people free from Egypt ... it had become another way of speaking of God's saving act, and it would have called to mind primarily the OT story of deliverance from Egypt' [as slaves]¹⁰

The NT picks up on this spiritual imagery of slavery often, as we see in Titus 1:1 Paul identifies his fundamental Christian identity as "slave of God." Titus 2:14 says we are Christ's "own possession" which makes sense as slaves owned by a Master. That language of God's own people is OT language of election, His special people of His gracious choice and calling:

Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a **people for His own possession** out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 7:7 "**The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples**, for you were the fewest of all peoples,

Deuteronomy 7:8 but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, **the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery**, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Redemption and deliverance from slavery is no small thing – it requires the almighty hand of our Omnipotent LORD and it's the same when we are chosen and saved from bondage. This image of redemption and deliverance of salvation is continued in the New Testament - Jesus says in John 8 we are all slaves of sin and in need of someone or something else to set us free. Sin is a wicked slavemaster that beats us down, we are trying to make bricks without straw, we have broken cisterns that hold no water.

But out of slavery God chooses a people for His own possession. God's choice of some and not others is not because we were greater and it was not because the Jews were greater in number of inherently better than other nations, but it was God's sovereign and gracious choice of them / us driven by His love, not our loveliness.

A master or Lord in the first century could pay a ransom or redemption price to buy back, sometimes it was 30 silver pieces.

1 Peter 1:18-20 (NASB95) ... you were not redeemed with perishable things like **silver or gold** from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ **but with precious blood**, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of **Christ**. ²⁰ For He was foreknown **before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times** ...

Paul used the words in Acts 20:28 of “the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood” and Ephesians 5:25 “Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her ... [v 27] ... that she would be holy”

Look at Titus 2:14 again: “He **gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed and to purify**”

Jesus did not just die on the cross for our salvation but for our sanctification, our purification, so that we didn't have to live in lawless sinful deeds anymore but could put them to death.

When God redeems us, we are not free from all yoke now to do our own thing and live our own life, Jesus says “take my yoke upon you” ... the difference is Jesus says “my burden is light.”

Everyone has a yoke, everyone is a slave of something or someone, but as Paul identifies himself in Titus 1:1, as believers we are slaves of God. Romans 6 says believers are saved so that they can be slaves of righteousness rather than slaves of sin.

As slaves of Christ, we can't just do whatever we want, we have to do what He wants. Paul says to the Corinthians “You are not your own, you have been bought with a price” (just like a slave).

We are under the Lord's yoke now as His slaves, and that's a good thing. When you call Jesus “Lord” you are saying He is your Master and you are His lowly slave who only wants to serve Him.

Let me just remind you of what we've learned before about slavery. Lordship and slavery means the end of our self, our will, our control, our life – that helps us understand why Jesus said “If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself.” That's slave talk. It's the end of you, and everything is about the Lord now.

Sin is a horrible slave master, but our Christ is a loving Lord and merciful Master. He's not a harsh tyrant, He's not abusive like some human slave-owners were, He's a gracious King who condescends to rescue those enslaved to sin. He Himself comes to the slave market of sin and purchases us with a price, the highest price, the death of His only beloved Son in exchange for slaves that hated Him, while they were yet sinners, Christ died to buy back with His precious blood these elect slaves as His own possession, for His own glory. The slaves God chooses of His own will and pleasure He also redeems, which is language of buying back a slave. And all these slaves will be taken to His house, they are provided for, protected, and personally loved.

Amazingly, our Master Himself came as a slave and to serve!!

Philippians 2 says He emptied Himself and took on the form of a slave when He came to earth, dying on a cross in such a form like a slave or common criminal.

Mark 10:43-45: "... whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but **to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.**"

You're a part of that "many" if you believe, you're a part of the church He purchased with His own blood and gave Himself for, if you have repented and trusted in Christ's work on the cross by His grace, you are one of those ransomed, rescued, redeemed from sin.

As we saw before when we studied this theme of slavery, this is perhaps the most staggering truth of all – not only did God's Son give His life as ransom for many slaves, paying in full to redeem them from the slave market at the price required, but:

- He who called His disciples slaves, in John 15 also calls those believers His friends
- After the resurrection He called them His own brethren
- He frees all His slaves from eternal bondage in hell, forgives all the sins we were enslaved to, gives us the grace to conquer the sins that still so easily entangle us
- God takes His slaves and also makes them sons (as some benevolent Romans did) and gives us all the rights as sons
- God adopts us into His own family
- God calls us joint-heirs with Christ

*Redeemed, Redeemed, Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb
Redeemed, Redeemed, His child and forever I am*

- Christ took our sin so that we can sing instead! "Worthy is the lamb that was slain ... worthy are you for you were slain and purchased for yourself men from every tribe and tongue ..."
- Instead of being in the lake of fire in Revelation 20, we actually get to be a part of the great choir of Revelation 5, the greatest choir ever, praising the redemption of the lamb forever!
- He lived as a lowly slave and died as a common criminal, so that I the guilty one could be free and live eternally!
- He paid the debt He did not owe for the debt we could not pay!
- He took my place on the cross, the punishment I deserved, the wrath of God that I should be receiving right now, and instead God lavishes His grace upon me in this life with blessings all mine and ten thousand beside in the next life! This is true of all who believe.

That's what our last of the four words THE CROSS means:

our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, ¹⁴who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

The cost of the cross was the greatest cost, the greatest price, the greatest sacrifice. The self-giving of the sinless Savior in death.

In another article, his words to his friends still enslaved to Islam is that there is only one way to Paradise "the way of Jesus who sacrificed himself on the cross for all of us."¹¹

He understands the life-changing power of these four words of the gospel, these four truths. Do you know them and love them?

GRACE – REPENTANCE – CHRIST – THE CROSS

If you have not before understood and embraced those truths fully before, I pray you will today, by God's grace, come to repentance, trust in Christ and His cross and take up your cross and follow Him

If you have already done that, I pray these four words will encourage you afresh and that you will live more in light of them.

BE GRACE-EMPOWERED
 BE REPENTANT
 BE CHRIST-FOCUSED
 BE A CROSS-CENTERED PERSON

*This, the pow'r of the cross: Christ became sin for us;
 Took the blame, bore the wrath—We stand forgiven at the cross.*

*Oh, to see my name Written in the wounds, For through Your suffering I am free.
 Death is crushed to death; Life is mine to live, Won through Your selfless love.*

*This, the pow'r of the cross: Son of God—slain for us.
 What a love! What a cost! We stand forgiven at the cross.*

¹ Phillip Towner, *New International Commentary on the New Testament*, "Pastoral Epistles," Eerdmans, 740, 744.

² Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary*, 371.

³ William Mounce, "The Pastoral Epistles," *Word Biblical Commentary*, Waco, Texas, p. 423.

⁴ "Homily 5," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Father*, 13:537

⁵ Ethan Cole, *Christian Post Reporter*-

- <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20080804/top-hamas-leader-s-son-converts-to-christianity.htm>

⁶ Mark Kelly, "Hamas leader's son, now a Christian, says only Gospel can transform Mideast"

<http://www.bpnews.net/BPnews.asp?ID=28663>

⁷ Daniel B. Wallace. (Zondervan, Michigan, 1999). *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, p. 735, summarizes it this way based on Sharp's own articulation of his rule:

Statement of the Granville Sharp Rule: both substantives (nouns, participles, adjectives) refer to the same person in the article-substantive-καί-substantive (TSKS) construction when:

- both are personal
- both are singular
- both are non-proper (i.e., common terms, not proper names)

Example: ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ (Eph 1:3)

⁸ Mounce, 428.

⁹ Towner, 756

¹⁰ Towner, 760

¹¹ "Son of Hamas leader declares his faith in Christ" Jody Brown - OneNewsNow - 8/11/2008