

Invitation to Participation

Titus 2:11-12

Intro

The God of the Bible is a God of *participation*...

We see this from the very first verse of the Bible...

Genesis 1:1 (NKJV)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Created is a *participation* word — the word **created** tells us that the heavens and the earth were the result of God's direct *participation* — of His direct *action*...

*Now, the fact that God is a God of **participation** has direct application for our lives because we human beings we have been created in God's image...*

Genesis 1:26-27 (NKJV)

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Please notice that the phrase **have dominion** is a phrase of *participation*...

- In fact, it is an ***invitation to participation*** — it is an invitation to participate with God in the work that He is doing in human history...

And this work that God is doing is still in progress — the Lord Jesus made this clear in John 5:17 when He said...

"My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

Now, this ongoing work of the Father and the Son is something that we are invited into — we have received an **invitation to participation**...

This invitation is made abundantly clear in...

Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV)

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

We were created for the purpose of ***participation*** — to participate in the life of God — but we must choose — moment by moment — how we will respond to that invitation...

We can reject the invitation to participation by choosing to do our own will...

Or we can receive the invitation to participation by choosing to to the will of the One who created us...

And as we choose to continually receive God's invitation to participation we will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to live the abundant life that the Lord Jesus promised in...

John 10:10 (NKJV) “...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

This is what is being offered to us through God's invitation to participation — a life of abundant fruitfulness — both now and in the unending life to come...

With this in mind, would you please follow along as I read the next passage that we come to in our study of Paul's letter to Titus...

Titus 2:11-15 (NKJV)

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

12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

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

14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

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

It was my plan to cover this entire passage this morning but instead we will only make it through vs 11 & 12 — so let's move into our first section...

1) Bringing Salvation (vs 11)

- [ex. you locked your keys in your car — waiting on the wonderful person who is **bringing** the spare key to you...]

Now, we live in a time in human history where it seems like anything can be brought to us — whatever we want or need is only a *door dash* away...

- But when it comes to **salvation** — what every human being needs most — there is no human service that can bring it to us...

*God is the only one who can **bring** salvation — and He brings that salvation by His grace...*

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

Here we are reminded that **salvation** is brought into our lives by **the grace of God** and not by any works that we can do...

- Or to put in another way — the ***spiritual door dash*** that **brings** salvation is **the grace of God** — and the Lord Jesus is the One who paid the bill...

The **grace of God** is the Lord's *unmerited favor* — we didn't do anything to deserve God's grace...

GRACE — God's Riches At Christ's Expense...

Let's continue on in Titus 2:11...

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

Now that we have briefly considered **the grace of God** — let's think about what the word **salvation** means...

- In many Christian circles, **salvation** is usually thought of simply in terms of being saved (or delivered) from the judgment that we deserve — of being saved from the punishment of hell...

And while that view of salvation is true — it is not the whole story...

The reality of our salvation is much, much greater...

To get a fuller view of the salvation that the grace of God brings to us, I believe that we should consider our salvation in terms of ***the past, the present*** and ***the future***...

- And the three words that connect to the past, present and future of our salvation are the words ***justification, sanctification, and glorification***...

Justification is related to the Past — We have been delivered from the punishment of sin...

Sanctification is related to the Present — We are being delivered from the power of sin...

Glorification is related to the Future — We will be delivered from the presence of sin...

For more on this subject, would you please turn to...

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

- [expand — we see ***justification*** and ***sanctification*** in these verses — and our ***participation*** in the process of sanctification contributes to our glorification...]

Romans 2:6-7 (NKJV)

6 [God] “will render to each one according to his deeds”:

7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality...

- [expand — crowns, rewards, authority, honor (parable of the talents)]...

We must understand that God’s ***invitation to participation*** is an invitation to live ***an eternal kind of life — right here, right now*** — to live out the Kingdom of God right where we are...

John 3:36 (NKJV)

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

John 5:24 (NKJV)

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

John 17:3 (NKJV)

“...this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

If you have been justified — if you have received the grace of God that brings salvation — then you are invited to participate in eternal life right now — eternal life has begun...[expand]

With that said, let's take one more look at Titus 2:11...

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

I believe that the phrase **has appeared to all men** speaks of the fact that the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus has taken place in human history...

For more on this subject, please turn to...

John 1:1-14 (NKJV)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Now please turn to...

Acts 26:24-29 (NKJV)

24 Now as he [Paul] thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

25 But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason.

26 For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things

escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

29 And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

- [expand — the fact that the cross is one of the most recognizable symbols in human history...]

The wonderful truth is that the grace of God is continually bringing salvation near...

- And today is the day of salvation — now is the appointed time — salvation is available to all because it is God's desire that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth...

With that said, please turn back to Titus 2 as we move into our second and final section...

2) Living Abundantly (vs 12)

To see how vs 11 & 12 fit together, I will read them both...

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

12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

Here we see that the **grace of God** is **teaching us** — **teaching us** that we are to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age...

What we have here is ***sanctification*** — ***a continual invitation to turn away from sin and to turn toward good works...***

And this is where so many believers fail to see that they are being presented with an ***invitation to participation...***

As believers, we are being invited into a life of meaning and purpose and fruitfulness — a life of flourishing — right here and right now...

It is vital to understand that God has not simply left us on this planet to kill time until we will end up in Heaven some day...

- Instead, God is present with us here and now — He wants to work with us and in us here and now...

Eternal life will not start for us once we are with Him in Heaven — we are to live that eternal kind of life with Him right now...

- But to walk with God in this way we must set aside our own agenda — there are some things that we just can't take with us if we are to enjoy a moment by moment walk with Him...

[ex. if you want to take a commercial flight there are many things that you cannot take on the plane — so you must make a choice — will I let go of the stuff or will I let go of the flight?...]

- And this is how it is with the Lord — He has good purposes and plans for us and with all His heart He invites us to participate in those good purposes and plans...

But if we are to accept His invitation then we must let go of some things — we must let go of things that will hinder our participation with Him...

And we are told in Titus 2:12 that we must willingly let go of — we must willingly deny — **ungodliness and worldly lusts**...

ungodliness — *a lack of reverence toward God; it's the opposite of the greatest commandment...*

Psalm 10:4 (NKJV)

**The wicked in his proud
countenance does not seek God;
God is in none of his thoughts.**

worldly lusts — *the strong, sinful desires that are normal in this fallen world...*

To see what the Apostle John wrote about worldly lusts, please turn to...

1 John 2:15-17 (NKJV)

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

And now we understand how ungodliness and worldly lusts fit together — **ungodliness** — a focus away from God // **worldly lusts** — seeking fulfillment in what a world oriented away from God offers...

Tragically, ungodliness and worldly lusts become a vicious cycle...

Ungodliness leads to worldly lusts which leads to more ungodliness which leads to a greater participation in worldly lusts and on and on it goes...

- [ex. Cain's failure to offer the proper sacrifice / his rejection of God's correction / his murder of Abel / Cain is banished...]

With this in mind, please turn to...

Galatians 5:19-21 (NKJV)

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- The fact is that worldly lusts are poison and they must be labeled that way — because they will bring destruction into the lives of anyone who participates in them...[expand]

So, as we turn back to Titus 2:12 we understand that as believers we are to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and instead...

we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

live — *the normal conduct of our life, our daily “walk”...*

live soberly — *live in our right mind; live in reality...*

- [ex. contrast with drunkenness — not seeing things as they actually are...]

There is no getting around the fact that the only people who can live life this way are those who ***understand*** the Word of God and ***submit*** to the Word of God...[expand]

For more on this subject, please turn to...

Psalm 1 (NKJV)

**1 Blessed is the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;**

**2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.**

**3 He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.**

**4 The ungodly are not so,
But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.**

**5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.**

**6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.**

- [expand — this is an invitation to participation — to participate in the abundant life that is offered to us...]

As we turn back to Titus 2:12 we see that believers are called to...

live righteously — *live uprightly in character, in thought, and in behavior; to live a life of doing what is right in God's eyes...*

The Lord Jesus is the ultimate example of this sort of life...

John 8:29 (NKJV)

“And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”

- The invitation to participation in the abundant life is a life lived to please God...[expand]

[expand — imagine a world where **everyone** made it their aim to always please God // now imagine a world where **you** made it your aim to always please God...]

Next we see that as believers we are invited to...

live godly — *live out the greatest commandment — love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul, all your mind and strength...*

- [expand — giving all of yourself over to God as a place for Him to dwell — as a place for Him to enjoy...]

Next we see that we are invited to...

live in the present age — *live right now; live in this time that you have been given...*

Matthew 6:33-34 (NKJV)

33 “...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

[expand — the present is the only time that can affect eternity — the past is gone and the future is uncertain — the abundant life is lived only in the present...]

Conclusion

And the Lord Jesus is inviting us into that abundant life today — His invitation to participation is still available...

So as we move into our time of communion I will close this study with the Lord Jesus' invitation to participation that is found in...

John 15:1-5 (NKJV)

1 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”