

A Gospel-Centered Christian

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Date: 24 March 2019

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, Paul's letter to Titus in chapter 2.
- Titus chapter 2, we're going to look at the whole chapter, but if we read again at verse 11, Titus 2 at verse 11. Where Paul writes, I think it's safe to say that instructions often come with incentives.
- Instructions often come with incentives because, well, when you're dealing with children or even grandchildren and you give them an instruction to do something, it's often followed by an incentive.
- An incentive that will make it worth their while obeying that instruction. And, you know, we do it all the time, maybe even almost instinctively, where you give a child an instruction to behave or to tidy their room or to listen carefully or to do something important.
- And you try and persuade them to follow your instruction by giving them an incentive. You promise them that if they obey your instruction, you'll give them a sweetie or chocolate or you'll take them to the park or you'll buy them a toy.
- [2 : 0 9] I suppose in many ways it's bribery. But, you know, that's what we do. Instructions are often followed by an incentive. The same is true when training a dog. Now, I'm not comparing children to dogs, but the principle is the same.
- If you're training a dog to obey your instructions, you give them an incentive to obey your instructions. You show the dog the treat that they will receive if they follow your instruction. If they roll over or whatever they do, lie on their back, the instruction comes with an incentive.
- And, you know, that's what Paul does here in this chapter. Paul gives instructions on how to live as a gospel-centered Christian. And in order to follow these instructions, Paul gives incentives so that we will live as a gospel-centered Christian.
- Instructions come with incentives. And the incentive that Paul gives, right, just those verses that we read at the end of the chapter, the incentive is that Jesus Christ will reveal himself, he will redeem his people, and he will restore his church.
- That's the incentive to live as a gospel-centered Christian. Jesus Christ will reveal himself, he will redeem his people, and he will restore his church.
- [3 : 2 5] And so what we see in this chapter is that instructions come with incentives. In fact, that's why Paul wrote these pastorally epistles. Paul wrote these pastorally epistles in order to instruct and to guide and to exhort and to encourage both Timothy and Titus.
- And we were looking at Timothy this morning. Timothy, as we saw, he was laboring in the city of Ephesus. But Titus, Titus here, he had his hands full on the Greek island of Crete.
- And as you would expect, both places, Ephesus and Crete, they were both places and the people there, they were different. But the problems were always going to be the same.
- But here in his letter to Titus, Paul is giving, he's giving personal and he's giving pastoral instructions to this young island minister in an island charge.

And Paul's greatest concern for the island congregation to whom Titus was the minister, his greatest concern was that they were self-centered. They were a self-centered island church.

[4 : 31] And in this letter, Paul is reminding Titus that they need to be gospel-centered, not self-centered. And, you know, we ought to notice Paul's emphasis upon the need to be gospel-centered.

We could notice it even from the structure of Paul's letter. We saw before, when we looked at chapter 1, right at the beginning, that Paul reminds Titus that he has a gospel-centered calling.

And his gospel-centered calling, we saw, was a call to preach to his people, a call to pastor his people, and a call to prepare his people for eternity.

As an island minister in an island church, Titus, he said, had a gospel-centered calling. But then when we looked at the second half of chapter 1, we saw that Paul teaches what it means to be a gospel-centered church.

And Paul said that a gospel-centered church will have leaders that have a gospel-centered character, a gospel-centered conduct, and a gospel-centered conversation.

[5 : 32] But now as we come to chapter 2, Paul gives directions on how to be a gospel-centered Christian. And then, God willing, next week in chapter 3, we'll see that Paul shows us that as a church, we are to have a gospel-centered commission.

And that's the structure of Paul's short letter to Titus. He gives to us a gospel-centered calling, a gospel-centered church. What is a gospel-centered Christian? And then a gospel-centered commission.

And, you know, Paul's greatest concern for this island church to whom Titus was the minister was that they would be gospel-centered and not self-centered.

And so having considered what it means to have a gospel-centered calling and be a gospel-centered church, this evening we're considering Paul's instructions and his incentives to live as a gospel-centered Christian.

A gospel-centered Christian. And we can look at these instructions and incentives under three headings. An exhortation, an example, and an encouragement.

[6 : 41] An exhortation, an example, and an encouragement. So look first of all at Paul's exhortation. He gives an exhortation. Look at verse 1.

Paul says to Titus, Before Paul gives his incentives to live as a gospel-centered Christian, Paul gives his instructions on how to live as a gospel-centered Christian.

And Paul's instructions, they come in the form of this exhortation. As he exhorts Titus to teach what accords with sound doctrine.

And Paul's exhortation to this young island minister, it's very direct and it's very personal. He begins chapter 2 with the words, But as for you.

Now Paul, he makes it very direct and very personal because he's saying it all in contrast to the false teachers who were causing chaos in Crete.

[7 : 46] Paul mentioned the false teachers in chapter 1. And he affirmed to Titus that they were empty talkers. They were deceivers. They must be silenced because they're upsetting all these families in the congregation.

But as for you, says Paul, As for you, Titus, You are to teach what accords with sound doctrine. And you know, I love this phrase that Paul keeps repeating.

He keeps saying the phrase sound doctrine. You know, the word sound in Greek is where we get the word hygiene from. And as you know, hygiene, well, hygiene is important.

Cleanliness is important. Being free of corruption is important. Being free from dirt or disease or decay is important. Because, well, good hygiene leads to good health and good fitness and having a good well-being.

And Paul is saying to Titus, he's saying to Titus, you need to ensure that the church in Crete is healthy. You need to ensure that what they're being taught is hygienic and wholesome doctrine.

[8 : 54] Because, he says, like healthy food will lead to a healthy body and a healthy lifestyle, so too will healthy doctrine lead to a healthy Christianity and a healthy church.

And, you know, it's actually something we touched on on Wednesday evening at the prayer meeting. That the church is described like a human body. We saw this in 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

Paul emphasized that the church is one body. We're all one body with many different members. And all the members of the body, just like our own bodies, they're all to work together for the good of the church and the glory of God.

And as Paul said, we saw this on Wednesday evening, he said in 1 Corinthians 12, he said, the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you. And the head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you.

The church is one body with many members. And all the members of the body, he says, they all have to work together for the good of the church and for the glory of God. Now, in this section, Paul is saying that if a part of your body was to become unwell, and it's no longer healthy, it actually affects the whole body, he says.

[10 : 16] Even speaking for yourself, if you had a migraine, you would have to lie down. Your whole body would have to lie down. You couldn't just lie down your head. If you broke a leg, you'd have to take it easy.

It would affect your whole body. If you had to have an operation on any part of your body, it would affect your whole body. Your whole body has to be put to sleep. And afterwards, it would leave your whole body feeling weak and tired.

If a part of the body was to become unwell and it's no longer healthy, it would affect the whole body. And that's what Paul is saying here.

That if a part of the body of Christ, the church, if a part of the church is affected by dirty, diseased, or decaying doctrine, then it will affect the whole church.

Therefore, says Paul, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Give them hygienic doctrine. Give them healthy food that will lead to a healthy body and the outcome will be healthy Christian living.

[11 : 24] And now, based upon this exhortation to Titus, addressing the whole body of the church, Paul addresses then all the different members that are part of the church, part of the body of Christ.

He addresses all the different categories of people that you find in a congregation. And what he addresses, he addresses all the temptations and all the challenges that we all face.

And as Paul exhorts us, he exhorts us so each part of the body will be healthy and live their life as a gospel-centered Christian.

You know, the first part of the body that Paul exhorts is the older men. The older men, those who have been walking with the Lord for a while. He says in verse 2, older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

Paul's exhortation to the older men in the congregation suggests, it actually suggests that they tended to be grumpy, they tended to pick arguments, they tended to be cynical about the work of the gospel, and they tended to be tired of giving themselves to the service of the Lord.

[12 : 43] But again, we see Paul using that word, sound. He says that the older men in the congregation are to be sound in faith. They're to be healthy in their faith.

They're to be doctrinally hygienic. They're to have a gospel-centered focus that will enable and encourage the work of the gospel to continue in the congregation.

Because, you know, one of the most unhealthy and one of the most unhelpful signs of an older Christian is when they say about the work of the gospel, it'll never work.

We've tried it before, and it didn't work. I don't know why we're even going to bother. If only things were the way they used to be, because it wasn't like this in my day. You know, that, my friend, is an unhealthy and an unhelpful Christian.

And there should be none of them in this congregation. In fact, one commentator says that Christian men, Christian men should grow old like Caleb.

[13 : 46] Christian men should grow old like Caleb. You remember, as a young man, Caleb was one of the 12 spies that Moses sent into the Promised Land.

And out of the 12, it was only Caleb and Joshua. They are the ones who had the faith and the confidence in God to believe that the Israelites, when they entered the Promised Land, they believed that they would have victory.

But the story of Caleb, it didn't end there when he was sent into the Promised Land. 45 years later, at the age of 85, when the children of Israel were finally entering into the Promised Land, Caleb, he's just as enthusiastic and he's just as confident in the Lord.

And you know, what we ought to learn from Caleb is that regardless of how old we are, as long as we're fit and able, we're not to retire from the service of Christ and his kingdom.

And now more than that, even Paul, he says that older men are to be dignified. We saw that word this morning. It means to be worthy of respect. They're to be honorable.

[14 : 55] They're to be so worthy of respect that younger men will look at them and want to follow their example. But then Paul, he goes on to another part of the body.

He addresses the older women in the congregation. He addresses them in verse 3. He says, older women, likewise, are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine.

They're to teach what is good. Paul exhorts Titus to teach older Christian women to have reverent behavior.

They're to be, he says, worthy of respect. They're to possess a godly character. And their character, says Paul, is to be the opposite of the devil.

And I mention that because the word slanderers, which Paul uses in this verse, it's literally translated as diabolos, which means the devil. The word diabolos means the devil or division or deception or derision.

[16 : 00] And that's who the devil is. That's what the devil does. He causes division. He causes deception. And he brings derision upon the Lord and his people. And Paul says, that's not what older Christian women are to be like.

They're not to cause division. They're not to be deceptive. They're not to even present derision. They're to be godly. They're to be godly, not gossipy.

They're to be devoted, he says, not drunkards. They're to be Christ-centered, not critical. They're not to be like the devil. And you know, in his commentary, Tim Chester, he makes very challenging comments in his commentary.

He says, it's easy for zeal and obedience to wane as we grow older and for realism to replace a radical approach to godly living. It's easy to look down on others and say they're not the wives, mothers, daughters they should be because they don't serve in the churches they should.

Perhaps, says Tim Chester, older women worry less about what other people think about them. But this often liberates them to complain and criticize more openly.

[17 : 15] But, he says, instead of complaining about what is wrong, they should teach about what is good. Instead of complaining about what is wrong, they should teach about what is good.

And Paul, he instructs the island, the women in the island congregation that older Christian women, he says, they should be a godly example. A godly example to younger women.

That's what he says in verses 4 and 5. He says, Paul says, that the older women in the congregation should train the younger women.

Literally, they should encourage, advise, and urge. They're to get alongside the younger women in the congregation. They're to encourage and advise and urge them to love their husbands and to love their children.

Now, when Paul talks in these verses, he doesn't say the young women can't have a career and that they can't work. But he does say that if they're wives, if they are wives and mothers, he says, the home is an important place.

[18 : 38] And it's a place where they are to serve. Because the instruction in verse 5, to be working at home, it doesn't mean that everyone has to be a stay-at-home mother. With so many financial pressures, sometimes that's not possible.

But Paul says this, he says this, not only that young women won't be lazy at home, but also that young women will understand that being at home with their family, it isn't of lesser importance than having a career.

One commentator, he makes the statement, young Christian wives should be content to stay at home with their children. But this is particularly a challenge in our culture. Our culture, which often despises the domestic life.

And you know, sometimes that's so true because a young Christian woman who had a career before they had children, and the children are young, and they feel like a somebody before they have children.

They feel that they have a purpose and they have a meaning to life. And that's because in our culture, people, they're defined, or they define themselves by their career, by what they do and how much income they have.

[19 : 49] But what can often happen is that when children come along and the career takes a back seat during those early years of raising the children, that young woman can go from feeling like a somebody with worth and value to feeling like a nobody who is worthless and insignificant.

And you know, that may be how the world defines young Christian women and their children, that they're worthless and insignificant, but that's not how the gospel defines them.

Paul makes, and you know, Paul, he makes this point, he highlights the point of older women encouraging and advising and urging younger women because the instruction to be a young Christian mother, faithfully bringing up her children, we have to understand it, he says, by the incentive.

The incentive, as he says later on in the passage, that young Christian women will be redeemed by Jesus. They will be restored by Jesus, and one day they will be made radiant by Jesus.

And that's why Paul says that older women who have been through that stage, who have passed through that stage of bringing up children, they're to encourage and advise and urge the younger women who are going through that stage, they're to encourage them and urge them and advise them to love their family and to love their home and not feel inadequate or worthless.

- [21 : 15] Because you know, with all the emotions and financial and even personal pressures of a young family, a young woman can lose sight very easily of her identity. But the older woman should remind the younger woman that her identity is in Jesus Christ.

And so, that's why Paul says, he says at the end of verse 6, at the end of verse 6, that in all your teaching, the word of God may not be reviled.

So it's important. Paul is addressing the body. He addresses the older men, the older women, the younger women, and then he comes to the young men in verse 6.

He says, likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. And you know, Paul, he only gives one exhortation to the young men. He says, be self-controlled.

It doesn't say much. But in many ways, it says everything. It covers all the temptations that young men face. Pride, anger, ambition, lust, impatience.

- [22 : 23] Young men are to have a self-controlled, he says, character, conduct, and conversation. But of course, the need to be self-controlled, it doesn't just apply to young men.

Paul has already told every member of the church that they're to exercise self-control. Paul said it about church leaders in chapter 1. He said it about older men. He said it about older and younger women.

And now he says it about young men. Therefore, what we ought to conclude from Paul's exhortation is that every member of the body of Jesus Christ is to possess that fruit of the Spirit, self-control.

We're to exercise a self-controlled character, conduct, and conversation. And so as Paul gives instructions and incentives to live as a gospel-centered Christian, he's given an exhortation.

But then he gives, secondly, an example. And this is the harder one for me. An example in verses 7 and 8. He says, show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works.

- [23 : 30] In all your teaching, show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

Even though he was a young island minister, Paul reminds Titus that he is to be an example to his congregation. He is to be a model of good works. That's what he says.

He is to be, he is to set the standard, you could say. He is to be an example to others. And he is to be an example by his teaching and his consistent Christian character.

Paul says to Titus, you are to be an example by your preaching, your pastoring, and your practice. You must practice, he says, what you preach. And your people must follow your example.

And needless to say, as a young island minister myself, I find this extremely challenging. But you know, it wouldn't be the word of God if it wasn't challenging.

- [24 : 33] And yet I take comfort from what Paul said to these other young men in the ministry. Paul said to Timothy, let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity.

And Timothy and Titus, they may have been young men in the ministry, but they were to be an example to their congregations. And they were to be an example by their preaching, their pastoring, and their practice.

And you know, what Paul is emphasizing to Titus, and even to the island congregation of which Titus was a minister, Paul is saying that there should never be this dichotomy between belief and behavior.

There should never be a contrast, he says, between doctrine and duty. They're to go together. They're to complement one another. because preaching and pastoring is to affect our practice.

Belief and behavior, doctrine and duty, they're all, they're to go together. They're not to fight against one another. They're to go hand in hand.

[25 : 42] And just because Titus and Timothy were young ministers, it didn't mean that their congregations weren't to take them seriously. No, Paul said to Timothy, let no one despise you for your youth.

And to Titus, Paul says here at the end of, end of the chapter in verse 15, he says, to clear these things, exhort and rebuke with all authority, let no one disregard you.

And you know, the message which Paul wants to get across to both pastor and to people is that in order to be a gospel-centered Christian, we must have a teachable spirit.

We must be willing to be taught and shaped and directed by God's word. You know, one of the most awful things about Christians is when they lack a teachable spirit.

They act like they know it all already and they don't need to be taught or be told by anyone. And if they are taught or if they are told, they take it as an attack rather than a desire for them to personally grow in grace and in the knowledge of their saviour, Jesus Christ.

[26 : 54] But you know, the truth is we need to be teachable. We're all disciples. That's what the word disciple means. It means we're learners. We all have to be teachable. And so, if we're not teachable, we need to grow up.

We need to take life seriously. We need to take our faith seriously. We need to submit ourselves to the authority of Jesus and his word. We need to do, as Paul says at the end of verse 10, we need to adorn the doctrine of God our saviour.

We need to decorate ourselves in the doctrine of grace and we need to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. So, why? So that we will live our lives as a gospel-centred Christian.

And you know, Paul wanted this island minister and his island congregation to take these instructions on board and seek to apply them in their lives.

Why? Because there's an incentive to all of this. There's an incentive to all of these instructions. As we said earlier, instructions, they come with incentives. And that's what Paul gives us at the end of the chapter.

[28 : 05] Paul is giving instructions to live as a gospel-centred Christian. And those instructions, they come by way of an exhortation and then an example. But the incentives, they come by the way of an encouragement.

And that's what we see lastly. An encouragement. We see that in verse 11. He says, The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, 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.

By giving his instructions about living as a gospel-centred Christian, and he gives that instructions by way of an exhortation and then by an example. By giving these instructions to us, Paul wasn't just saying, we need to try harder.

He wasn't saying, you just, well, you just need to put in a bit more effort. You need to be more committed. He was saying that, but that's not all he was saying. Because to only give instructions with no incentive, that will never lead to transformation.

It will only lead to more condemnation. If you're told again and again, you need to be this, and you obviously know, well, I'm not this. I don't live up to any of these things you're saying. You just feel condemnation all the time.

[29 : 44] But when there's an incentive, that's what leads to transformation. And so Paul, he sets before us this incentive, this encouragement to live as a gospel-centred Christian.

And he does it, amazingly, in one sentence. Because verses 11 to 14, they're all one sentence. And when Paul writes one sentence, he's, you know, he's full of energy.

He's wanting to present this to us. He wants us to take it all on board as one piece. And you know, the encouragement Paul gives is an encouragement of grace and glory.

It's an encouragement of grace and glory. Because what Paul says in verses 11 to 14 is that we live between two appearances. We live between two appearances.

The two appearances of grace and glory. In which the grace of God, he says, has already appeared. And now we're waiting for the second appearing of glory.

[30 : 42] Paul says that the grace of God has appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, you could say that the incarnation, the birth of Jesus, the life of Jesus, the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, the ascension of Jesus Christ, it was all an act of grace.

It was a gift. A gift to mankind. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. It was an act of grace. It was the appearing of God's grace to sinful mankind.

And Paul says that the grace of God has appeared, bringing with it the promise of salvation to everyone who believes. And because the grace of God has appeared, he says, in the person of Jesus Christ, we now have an example to follow.

And by following the example of Jesus, he says, we must deny self, we must take up our cross, and we must follow Jesus. We must live for Jesus.

And by living for Jesus, he says, we will be, as he says in verse 12, trained. We will be disciplined and taught to live as a gospel-centered Christian.

[31 : 56] Because it's only when we follow the example of Jesus Christ and when we are enabled by the Holy Spirit, we will be disciplined so as to do, as he says in verse 12, to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present world.

And we will do that. The church, he says, will do that. We will be disciplined by the example of Jesus and the enabling of the Holy Spirit to live as a gospel-centered Christian until, until the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Christ. So we're to live as disciples because of the grace that has appeared and we're to do it until the glory appears.

The glory of Jesus appears again. And you know, when Paul speaks, he's speaking here about the second coming and whenever he describes the second coming, Paul always describes it as the appearing of his glory.

Jesus Christ, tonight, he reigns in heaven. He reigns as the glorified King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But at present, the reign and glory of King Jesus is hidden.

[33 : 20] But one day, says Paul, it will be revealed. It will appear. And when it's revealed at the appearing of his glory, Paul says, every knee will bow.

Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. You know, is that not what Jesus said about his second coming? He speaks in Matthew chapter 25.

Jesus says, when the Son of Man comes in his glory, with all the holy angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. And before him, he says, will be gathered all the nations.

And he will separate one from another as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will say, he will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. And the king will say to those on his right, come, you blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world.

Then he will say to those on his left, depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. It's all about grace and glory.

[34 : 30] And you know, we often view the second coming. We often view the appearing of Christ's glory as something negative. We view it as negative because, well, it will mean the end of all hope for the unconverted.

It will mean that there's no more opportunities to seek the Lord and be saved. But the truth is, by the time glory comes, the glorious appearing of Jesus, the unconverted will have had plenty of opportunities.

Isn't that right, my unconverted friend? You've had plenty of opportunities. You've had plenty of opportunities to seek the Lord and be saved. But the thing is, you need to use them.

You need to use them in this time of grace before the appearing of glory. You need to use these opportunities before Jesus appears before you in glory.

Or you appear before him at his glorious judgment throne. You need to use your opportunities. But you know, what Paul is reminding us here is that the appearing of Jesus in glory, it should be an encouragement to us.

[35 : 41] Grace and glory should be an encouragement. Because Paul says, this is our blessed hope. hope. This is what the Christian life is all about. The appearing of Jesus in glory.

He says, it will mark the completion of our redemption. It will mark the climax of his restoration. It will mark the culmination of the resurrection.

Where everyone will be raised and stand before him at the last day. The appearing of Jesus in glory. This is our blessed hope, he says. And it should be an encouragement to us to live our life as a gospel-centered Christian.

Because the thing is, we live between these two appearances. Two appearances of grace and glory. Grace has appeared bringing salvation. And now we're waiting for the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

And he will appear at the last day. And it should be an encouragement to us. Grace has appeared, my Christian friend, in order to prepare you for glory.

[36 : 51] Grace has appeared in order to prepare you for glory. The gift of salvation has come to you so that you will live your life as a gospel-centered Christian and also not only live your life as a gospel-centered Christian, but also die your death.

A glorious death. A glorious death. There's nothing like the death of a Christian. It's not what the catechism reminds us about the benefits, the benefits of the believer of grace and glory.

I was thinking, well, about Norman, the empty place, grace and glory. What benefits do believers receive at their death? The catechism asks.

The souls of believers, not members. The souls of believers are at their death. The importance is to believe. Whether you're a member or not, that does not bother me.

I want you to be a member of the church in heaven. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and they do immediately pass into glory. And their bodies, their bodies, still precious to Jesus, the body, still being united to Christ, it rests in the grave until the resurrection.

[38 : 13] But then you go to the next catechism. That's not the end of it. We're told that at the resurrection, when the appearing of Jesus comes in glory, believers will be raised up in glory.

They will stand before Jesus. They will be openly acknowledged and acquitted on the day of judgment. They will be made perfectly blessed and they will go in to the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

And it's the full enjoying of God because it's both body and soul. My friend, what better incentive, what better incentive to have to live your life as a gospel-centered Christian than to know that you have received grace and one day you will experience glory.

What better incentive than to know that you have all these benefits waiting for you at death and even the resurrection at the last day.

What better incentive to live your life as a gospel-centered Christian? And for the unconverted, well, I don't know why you're still unconverted.

[39 : 20] Why aren't you committed to this? To receive grace and be promised glory. And so we've been saying this evening, instructions often come with incentives.

And in this chapter, Paul has been giving instructions to live as a gospel-centered Christian. And those instructions, they came by the way of an exhortation and an example.

But the incentive, it comes by the way of an encouragement. And what better encouragement to have to live your life as a gospel-centered Christian than that.

Grace has appeared. Grace has appeared in order to bring you to glory. Grace has appeared in order to bring you to glory.

May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, we thank Thee for Thy Word. Thy Word that gives to us instructions, but it also gives to us incentives.

[40 : 21] The incentive, Lord, that we are not the finished article, but that we have this glorious future. A future that waits for us and has been prepared for us beyond the veil of time.

And help us then, we pray, to trust in our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to keep our eyes firmly fixed upon Him, to live every day for Him, to know that He is our King, He is our Lord, He is our Master, and that every day we would take up our cross and follow after Him, to live lives that are God-honouring and God-glorifying and Christ-exalting.

O do us good, then, Lord, we pray. Bless us in the week that lies ahead, a week that is unknown to any of us. But we give thanks, Lord, that this is where we began it, in the Lord's house, on the Lord's day.

Keep us then, we pray, go before us, for Jesus' sake. Amen. We shall bring our service to a conclusion by singing the words of Psalm 68.

Psalm 68, page 303. Psalm 68, we're singing in the verse 18 down to the verse marked 20, page 303.

[41 : 47] And these words, you could say, that they present to us both grace and glory. Jesus has ascended and He has given to us gifts, and everyone who trusts in Him receives these gifts, even at death.

Thou hast, O Lord, most glorious, ascended up on high, and in triumph victorious led captive captivity. Thou hast received gifts for men, for such as did rebel, yea, e'en for them that God the Lord in midst of them might dwell.

We'll sing on down to the verse marked 20 of Psalm 68 to God's praise. God the Lord of the angels ■ notifications fornicia e at voice be whipped and Lord that God has left scarcely able, ■ the Lord of the idols and the glory is The lost receiving gifts for men, for such a chastened rebel.

In for them that caught the Lord, and midst of them might dwell.

Blessed be the Lord, who is to us, of our salvation God.

[43 : 41] Who daily with his benefits, us plenteously doth Lord.

Ye of salvation is the God, who is our God most strong.

And unto God the Lord, from death he is sure to belong.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.