



Walking with Jesus: The Road Goes Ever On.

Titus 2v11-15

Sermon – Greg Holmes – 3 October 2021

Let's PRAY to start.

*Lord and Heavenly Father, preach through this passage to me
and to all who share in this time of learning*

Help us to sense your presence as we consider your Word.

Anoint the delivery of this message.

Do what we can't. Bridge the gap. Fill what is lacking.

Lord, now, prepare our hearts to hear your voice.

Lord Jesus, change us together.

AMEN

Introduction

Are you getting a bit fed up of making plans that then fall apart?
How many times in the last 20 months or so have you put a date,
appointment, itinerary in your calendar only to have to scrub it out,
postpone, cancel or move it (in vain hope) a long way down the
track?

I know Helen and I have had to re-schedule a Queensland trip
totally twice and we now have no idea when we can do that.

And we have been waiting since the beginning of June for a date
for a Memorial Service for Helen's sister-in-law.

However! Today!

I want to introduce you to, or remind you of, a date, a wonderful
day, that you cannot put definitively in your calendar or diary or
smart phone.

But it is a day that IS definitely coming, on a day already fixed,
without a doubt; and which cannot be thwarted by virus, drought,
fire, famine, earthquake, war or anything else.

But before we get to that...

Discipleship series

Over the last 10 weeks or so we have been looking at the Road of Discipleship - the Christian life, the Christian walk.

We have considered:

Becoming a Christian

The centrality of Jesus to our walk

The importance of reading the Bible...

...and of prayer

And we have looked at:

The need to relate to one-another in

Service,

Other-person-centredness,

Humility and

Love.

And last week we considered the importance of telling others of the great salvation we have in Jesus.

Now, as we wrap up our series, we look at the idea that 'The Road Goes Ever On'. The phrase actually comes from a Poem in J.R.R. Tolkien's book "The Hobbit". Both Tolkien's "The Hobbit" and "The Lord of the Rings" are 'road' adventures ...travelling...to a form of salvation.

And thus, as the Christian road goes ever on, so we look forward to continuing that road, perfectly, in the New Heaven and New Earth established when Jesus returns.

So let's turn to some Scripture - first to Titus 2:11-13. And the question I want to ask is – WHY?

Why follow Jesus?

Why read the Bible and pray?

Why do we have to care for one another in service, other-person-centredness, humility and love?

And why tell others about Jesus?

Well, Titus 2 gives us two reasons:

Paul speaks to Titus of discipleship in slightly different terms. He defines it in v12 as:

¹² ...Say(ing) “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to liv(ing) self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age...

But he also gives us two reasons for doing so. Verse 11:

...the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

The appearance of God's grace is quite simply, Jesus, as v14 explains

Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own...

So we walk down the road of discipleship out of the knowledge that God, in his grace through Jesus, has acted to save us.

AND as well – as v13 says - we walk as disciples because

¹³ ...we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ...

We walk as disciples because we look forward in certain hope that Jesus will 'appear' (come back) to fulfill, consummate, complete all that he has done.

So in the meantime we give our lives to Christ, follow Jesus, read the Bible, pray and care lovingly for one another and tell others about Jesus.

To put it all together:

11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

So now we come to this certain hope. Bob Dylan has written ‘we are hanging in the balance of a perfect finished plan.’ God’s plan - to have ‘**a people that are his very own**’ (Titus 2:14) - is not yet complete. Our road, as disciples, has not yet reached its destination, its perfection, and it won’t till Jesus returns and we see ‘face to face’ and know the fullness of God’s story.

The road goes ever on...

Body

So let’s have a brief look at what the ‘end’ of the road is all about. In the Gospels, Jesus speaks of the end times. Let’s look at Luke 17: the passage is 20-37 but we will just look at a couple of verses:

Luke 17 ²⁴ For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. ²⁵ But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

So you won’t miss it – it will be obvious and both frightening and comforting at the same time.

Also:

Luke 17:26 *“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷ People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.*

We will be about our ordinary lives, doing what we always do. And suddenly Jesus will return – with salvation and judgment!

³¹ *On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. ³² Remember Lot’s wife! ³³ Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it.*

It will not be a day for worrying about the ‘stuff’ of life. Remember Lot’s wife! It is LIFE in Jesus that is important.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 gives us some further clues:

Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

It will come as a surprise; calculating the date doesn’t work!

4 *But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.*

But be ready...awake, sober...prepared!

⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We belong to the day – and we belong to THAT day!

¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

So walk the road of discipleship!

¹¹ Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

That is what this series, and indeed Christian life, Christian walk, Christian discipleship has been all about.

So where does it lead us? Isaiah 65:17-25 gives us some clues:

See, I will create new heavens and a new earth.

*The former things will not be remembered,
nor will they come to mind.*

*¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create,
for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight
and its people a joy.*

*¹⁹ I will rejoice over Jerusalem
and take delight in my people;
the sound of weeping and of crying
will be heard in it no more.*

...

*²⁵ The wolf and the lamb will feed together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox,*

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and dust will be the serpent's food.*

*They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.*

Wow! That glorious hope!

*...the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great
God and Savior, Jesus Christ... (Titus again)*

Conclusion

So what does all that mean for us this week as we struggle with the ever varying, ever frustrating, challenging and depressing fact of lockdown and the ever present threat of COVID-19?

It leaves us walking the forever road of discipleship. This not like our plans which are constantly changed by the external, and sometimes internal circumstances. We have a certain hope and God has an unchangeable plan.

In something I was reading over the last couple of weeks I came across the Dutch word, 'voorpret' – apparently it describes the pleasure and excitement we get from the anticipation of something good happening. And 'voorpret' is what we should have as Christians walking the demanding and sometimes difficult road of Discipleship.

We have a certain hope!

God has a plan that cannot be thwarted!

Jesus is coming again

to complete the salvation begun at the cross!

So be encouraged!

Be excited!

Look expectantly for Jesus' great second coming!

I like this story:

An elderly sister from our church who deeply loved Jesus was on her deathbed and was asked by a visiting member, “How are you feeling?” The sister slowly opened her eyes, smiled, and said, “I’m almost well.”

In the meantime...remember that:

11 ... the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ...

Let’s conclude with another glimpse of what God has in store for us...

God’s Plan for Us

Revelation 21:1-8

1 Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

5 He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”