

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Grace in action: exploring the intersection of soteriology and ethics in the letter to Titus

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Abstract

This article investigates action of grace in Titus 2:11 and argues for a congeniality in this epistle with Pauline thought on grace as interpreted by John Barclay in *Paul and the Gift*. Barclay's disentanglement of the concept, including his newfound taxonomy for χάρις, advances Pauline studies significantly, yet it has not informed studies of the Pastoral Epistles. The article examines the juxtaposition of soteriology and ethics found in Titus 2:11–14 and 3:4–7, proposing that the subsequent passage is an elaboration of the first, which sheds light on the idiosyncratic notion of God's grace performing ethical training.

Keywords: John Barclay; ethics; grace; Paul; soteriology; Titus

The notion of *paideia* was at the heart of ancient Greco-Roman ethical and intellectual cultivation. In Titus 2:11–14 we are told that grace performs this work; through the participle *παιδεύουσα*, the notion is conveyed that God's revealed grace calls the believing community to godly conduct. Investigating grace as an active agent performing ethical training carries intrinsically the issue of correlation between divine and human agency in the Christian life. This dichotomy, and the dynamic Pauline usage of the term χάρις, has puzzled theologians through the ages and has given rise to vastly different accounts of what grace really is and how it works.¹

Within Pauline theology is transformed ethical behaviour rooted in divine grace? This issue has been scrutinised by Pauline scholars in the undisputed letters, but the Pastorals were often neglected, probably due to the fact that their authenticity has been questioned since the time of Schleiermacher.² On the assumption that Titus is

¹It spans from denoting the epochal Christ event, to individual human experience of God, as well as to specific divine enabling and commissions. For an informative summary of the term's conceptual range in the *Corpus Paulinum*, see James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), p. 320.

²See Howard I. Marshall, 'Recent Study of the Pastoral Epistles', *Themelios* 23/1 (1997), pp. 3–29. Towards the end of the last millennium, many, following Martin Dibelius, asserted that these letters were more concerned with a 'bourgeois Christianity' than with reflection rooted in eschatology, christology and soteriology, and in this respect stand in sharp contrast to the historical Paul. See Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), pp. 25–6. Even if there has been some attention given to the theology of the Pastorals the last two decades, there is certainly more to be

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among the earliest receptions and reframings of the apostle Paul, this letter may very well reveal something of the theological baseline from which these reframings emerged, a perspective which asks for further investigation. If Titus originated from the late Paul himself, it deserves even more attention and should be scrutinised in relation to the theory of salvation in the undisputed letters. This epistle is, as we shall see, soteriologically concerned and creative.

I will in this article explore the intersection of soteriology and ethics found in Titus 2:11–14, a passage where the issue of the relation between divine and human agency comes to the forefront. This is done by attending to the meaning of *παιδεύουσα*, with *ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ* as its active subject, as well as considering the most recent and thorough research on the Pauline usage of grace. I will thus engage the helpful disentanglement of *χάρις* made by John Barclay in his recent monograph *Paul and the Gift*. I argue that Barclay's two most important findings regarding the 'perfectings' of grace in Pauline soteriology – that incongruity is its most striking and constituent part and the absence of non-circularity – fit well with the Titus kerygma and its function in relation to ethical imperatives in that letter.

Grasping key terms

What is being referred to in Titus 2:11 by the expression *ἐπεφάνη ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ*? Possibly it points to the divine Word being continually made 'visible' through the preaching of the gospel.³ Such an interpretation is understandable; God is said in the introduction of the letter to reveal his word (*ἐφανέρωσεν*) through the apostolic preaching (1:3). The verbs *φανερῶ* and *ἐπιφαίνω* are, of course, related, stemming from the same root *φαν-*. Doctrine and sound teaching enjoy a prominent place throughout all three chapters of Titus, creating a matrix in which the training of God's grace in our paragraph could be understood in a logocentric fashion.⁴ Also, the concepts of 'seeing' and 'knowing' are semantically linked in Greco-Roman thinking.⁵

However, the cognate noun *ἐπιφάνεια* in the Pastoral Epistles is exclusively related to the person Jesus Christ.⁶ Also, the universal rendering of this grace to 'all humans' suggests a general historical event accessible to humanity, rather than a religious

done. The rigorous treatments of Pauline soteriology made by N. T. Wright and James D. G. Dunn were almost exclusively based on the undisputed Pauline canon of seven letters. This minimalistic method is unfortunate for the account of Pauline theology, as Garwood Anderson recently has pointed out. See Garwood P. Anderson, *Paul's New Perspective: Charting a Soteriological Journey* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic 2016), e-pub, ch. 5. Anderson argues that the lack of data has skewed the depiction of Pauline soteriology, and that more analyses are required in which the disputed letters, even the Pastorals, are taken into account.

³See Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 142.

⁴E.g. Titus 1:1–2, 9, 11b, 14; 2.1, 5, 7b; 3:14.

⁵The perfect form *οἶδα*, with its present meaning 'I know', stems from *εἶδον* 'I saw', both emerging the same root *ἰδ-*. See Jerker Blomqvist and Poul Ole Jastrup, *Grekisk-Græsk Grammatik* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 2006), p. 149.

⁶E.g. 1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 1:10; 4:1, 8; Tit 2:13. Both Howard Marshall and George Knight read *ἐπεφάνη* in light of 2 Tim 1:9, where Christ is equated with the *ἐπιφάνεια* of God's grace, in contrast to a merely logocentric understanding. See I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: T&T Clark, 1999), p. 312; and George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), p. 339.

narrative. I suggest that God's grace here should be interpreted as the Christ event itself, which of course poses the question of time and causality: how could a past event perform ongoing ethical training?

Taking God's revealed grace in Titus 2:11 as the actual Christ event does not mean that the kerygma cannot also be implicit in the expression; the author may possibly have both revelatory aspects in mind. Similarly, the Pauline notion of 'the word of the cross' (1 Cor 1:18) as God's power conveys more than a reminder of an event; it points to a recapitulation of that event, implementing its implications.

In the immediately subsequent and related passage of Titus 3:4–7, the revealed Christ event itself is closely connected to the ongoing personal experience of this salvific event. These two soteriological pericopes are clearly lexically and thematically linked, one obvious instance being the use of the verb ἐπιφάνω. Out of only four occurrences of this word in the New Testament, two are found in these two kerygmatic utterances, and in exactly the same form: aorist, passive, indicative, third person singular. I suggest that this is deliberate, and that the latter passage works as an elaboration of the former. The fact that χρηστότης and φιλανθρωπία stand together as subject to ἐπεφάνη in Titus 3:4 indicates that they are regarded as one.⁷ Their appearance is equivalent to the appearance of χάρις in Titus 2:11, communicating a revelatory salvific event.

The Pastoral Epistles provide ten out of 24 mentions of σωτήρ in the New Testament. For the adjective σωτήριος the ratio is six out of eight. In Titus 2:11 this adjective functions predicatively and agrees with χάρις, conveying the thought of God's revealed grace bringing salvation to all humans.⁸ It carries all the semantical range of the verb σώζω.⁹ Being anarthrous, it shows us that the grace of God was revealed with saving power, whereas with a definite article it would have worked substantively meaning merely 'God's saving grace'.

Salvation is a prominent theme in the Pastoral Epistles;¹⁰ both 'God' and 'Jesus Christ' are ascribed the title σωτήρ.¹¹ The main verb of the kerygma in chapter 3 is ἔσωσεν. Both these soteriological paragraphs portray a revelatory and salvific act of God formulated slightly differently, with the appearance of God's χάρις the focus in chapter 2, and his χρηστότης and φιλανθρωπία in chapter 3.¹² This saving revelation of Christ is also linked to ethical renewal in both these passages.

Our predicative participle of interest – παιδεύουσα – stands here in present tense, nominative active, and should best be translated as 'training', since the verb may convey aspects of both discipline and instruction.¹³ The rather wide semantic range of παιδεύω can be seen in Luke's use of the term. In his Gospel it denotes the punishment of Jesus (Luke 23:16, 22); but in Acts the verb is employed of Moses being educated in the wisdom of Egypt (Acts 7:22), and likewise of Paul being educated under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). For Paul it denotes discipline in the Corinthian correspondence (1 Cor 11:32; 2 Cor 6:9). But even if it seems to carry connotations of harsh discipline or punishment

⁷See Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 338.

⁸Following the reading of the Codex Sinaiticus (σωτήρος) would not change the thrust of the argument of this article.

⁹G. Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament –Abridged* [hereafter TDNT], trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), p. 1140.

¹⁰Georg M. Wieland, *The Significance of Salvation* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2006), p. 265.

¹¹The title is given to God in Tit 1:3; 2:10; 3:4, and to Christ in Tit 1:4; 2:13.

¹²See Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 339. Cf. John N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London: A&C Black, 1963), p. 250.

¹³See Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 319.

in Paul, the term also does have didactic meaning for the apostle (Rom 2:20).¹⁴ In contrast to the more intellectualistic διδάσκαλος, the noun παιδευτής has more concrete overtones, suggesting practical guidance and direction.¹⁵ Some translations choose didactic terms, which narrow down the meaning unnecessarily.¹⁶ ‘Training’, I would suggest, is a term further up on the taxonomic scheme than ‘teaching’, and so enables us to have a broader picture of both theory and practice in the formative endeavour of grace.

Ethics and soteriology in Titus

The prevalence of the epithet ‘saviour’ in Titus indicates that the letter’s ethical teachings occur in a soteriological framework.¹⁷ The kerygma is a central notion in Titus.¹⁸ It has been argued by Philip Towner, and I think rightly so, that the two kerygmatic utterances in Titus 2:11–14 and 3:4–7 can be viewed as a rhetorical high points of the letter.¹⁹ Both stand out in their lofty Greek tone as well as in content among this epistle’s frequent ethical paraenesis. We can feel within them the weight of the letter’s introduction (1:1–4), with its stated purpose.²⁰ The posture of the author is communicated here; it is by ‘knowing the truth’ that one approaches εὐσέβειαν (1:1). This goal of godly conduct is immediately stressed in 3:8b with the purpose clause ἵνα φροντίζωσιν καλῶν ἔργων προΐστασθαι.

I maintain that these two kerygmata should be read together, and that they provide a soteriological grounding for this epistle’s ethical and pastoral paraenesis. If correct, this would be in line with a well-attested Pauline pattern of argument that tends to move from theological indicatives to ethical imperatives.²¹ In Titus 2, the section preceding verse 11 starts by referring to ‘sound doctrine’ (2:1) and ends with a reference to ‘the doctrine of God our Savior’ (2:10) and may thus be regarded as a set of imperatives to the Christian household rooted in and reflecting God’s truth. Then verses 11–14 proclaim this salvific truth, providing the doctrinal basis for the exhortations given earlier. The connection to the immediately foregoing is shown through the conjunction γάρ, which commences this kerygma.

Of course, there is no complete consensus in the scholarly world as to whether there is any clear connection in logic between Titus 2:11–14 and the preceding and following

¹⁴Here, παιδευτής is found besides διδάσκαλος describing the boastful Jew. Confer Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1966 [1924]), p. 144.

¹⁵See G. Bertram in *TDNT*, p. 620.

¹⁶E.g. the German *unterweist* (ELB) and the French *enseigne* (BFC) as well as the English ‘teaching’ (KJV, NIV). Better, I suggest, is the Swedish term *fostrar* (SFB).

¹⁷This noun is used on 24 occasions in the New Testament, of which ten are found in the Pastorals: 1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; 2 Tim 1:10; Tit 1:3–4; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6.

¹⁸The kerygma is regarded as an important revelatory entity, and the term may denote the act of preaching or the content proclaimed. See Tit 1:3b; cf. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, ch. II.A.

¹⁹Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, p. 740.

²⁰We interpret κατά with accusative in 1:1 to mean basically ‘concerning’, in the sense of promoting or leading to godliness (cf. ESV). On the meaning of κατά, see Nässelqvist, *Nytestamentlig Grekiska*, p. 79; and Blomqvist and Jastrup, *Grekisk-Græsk Grammatik*, p. 199. In this sense, the author in his ministry promotes the faith and knowledge of the truth, which in turn promotes godliness.

²¹The causative particle οὖν introducing subsequent paraenesis has often been understood as pointing toward this (e.g. Rom 12:1; Gal 5:1; 1 Thess 4:1).

parenthetic instruction.²² If there is none, then the lexical connections of the passage to the immediately preceding – καλῶν ἔργων (2.7) and τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ (2.10) – would be merely word association, without logical connection. This seems unlikely to my mind. Such lexical linking may very well originate from a logical correlation in the mind of the author/compiler. Both salvation and good deeds are concepts very central to the aims of this epistle.²³

Of course, correlation is not the same as causation. However, a causality seems to be suggested by the ἵνα phrases of Titus 2:12, 14 and 3:8. The zeal for the good comes out of Christ's self-giving in Titus 2:14. In Titus 3:8 it is the formulaic expression of a 'trustful saying', which must be proclaimed in order that believers shall be willing to do what is good.²⁴ The content of the trustful saying here includes both the objective appearance of God's goodness and love of humans, as well as its subjective realisation. In other words, this trustful saying is a soteriological declaration, based on the Christ event, that *holds together* the historical salvific event as such with an ongoing salvific and transformative experience flowing from that event.

Barclay in brief

Barclay seeks to investigate χάρις from the perspective of gift giving. His point of departure is anthropological, starting from Marcel Mauss' seminal 'Essai sur le don', which investigated gifts and gift relations in archaic societies, the 'spirit of the gift' (i.e. its affiliation to the donor, a notion most foreign to modern western thinking) and the obligation to return.²⁵ Barclay sketches the history of gifts throughout the Greco-Roman era and the emergence of the concept of 'pure' gift as a modern western invention, engaging (among others) the increasingly widespread views of Jacques Derrida.²⁶

From his anthropological probing, Barclay sets off with five foundational notations: (1) 'gift' is to be rendered broadly, involving favours, benefactions and services of many kinds; (2) the importance of the mapping of the role and significance of 'gifts' for the larger social matrix of relations; (3) the importance of looking at what kinds of relationships are formed and by what kind of gift; (4) the assumption that the gifts are given with expectations of a return; and (5) the need to beware of modern western categories such as 'pure' or 'free' in our study of ancient gifts.²⁷ Barclay notes that the notion of a 'pure' gift with no strings attached is a modern product, derived from the thought of Martin Luther and Immanuel Kant.²⁸ Distancing ourselves from this understanding of gift allows the possibility of gifts being both voluntary and obliged, both generous and constrained, thereby allowing a reframing of the Pauline doctrine of grace and opening new avenues for discussion of Pauline soteriology and ethics.²⁹

²²James D. Miller, *The Pastoral Letters as Composite Documents* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), p. 132.

²³It is striking how often allusions to 'good works' are found in Titus: 1:16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14. Elsewhere in the Pastoral Epistles, see 1 Tim 2:10; 3:1; 5:10 (twice), 25; 6:18; 2 Tim 1:9; 2:21; 3:17; 4:18.

²⁴This expression πιστὸς ὁ λόγος is formulaic. Cf. Rick Brannan, *Lexical Commentary of the Pastoral Epistles: 1 Timothy* (Bellingham, WA: Appian Way Press, 2016), Logos Bible Software Edition, ch. 11. The idiom occurs five times in the New Testament, all in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Tit 3:8).

²⁵John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), pp. 15–17.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 59–63.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 22–3.

²⁸Ibid., p. 185.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 20–1.

The anthropological background provided by Barclay is highly relevant for our perception of the teachings of Paul. He shows that Mauss exposed a lot of our western modern polarities regarding gifts (e.g. ‘interested’ versus ‘disinterested’, ‘obligated’ versus ‘free’) that skew our perception of gifts. If he is right, and if traditional cultures’ practice of gift-giving did exhibit both freedom and obligation at once, then it is important not to play the two off against one another, as exegetes and theologians have often done in their interpretations of χάρις in Paul through the ages. Barclay creates a taxonomic differentiation for the concept of χάρις as a gift, providing an immensely insightful list of six different ‘perfectings’ or radicalisations of this gift of grace:

- (1) superabundance – the scope of the gift, its excessiveness and all-encompassing nature;
- (2) singularity – the *modus operandi* of the giver, who is driven by mere benevolence;
- (3) priority – the timing of the gift, that it always precedes the response of the receiver;
- (4) incongruity – the gift is given unconditionally, without regard to prior worth of the recipient;
- (5) efficacy – the gift achieves fully what it was supposed to achieve;
- (6) non-circularity – the gift is given without any thought of return.³⁰

One or a few of these perfectings have often been presupposed by interpreters (in a variety of ways) but remained unarticulated.

Barclay then scrutinises the key theologians of the concept of grace from Marcion, through Augustine, Luther and Calvin, continuing with Barth, Bultmann, Käsemann, Martyn, as well as Sanders and the ‘New Perspective’. He even refers to the engagement of the European philosopher Alain Badiou with the formal features of Pauline thought. In the process, he notes that the radicalising of one aspect of grace does not imply similar radicalisation of all the others.³¹ For instance, it is possible to advocate for the priority of grace but not its singularity (Augustine), or the efficacy of grace without its non-circularity (Calvin). Barclay’s taxonomic differentiation allows us to see that the many polarisations of grace have been due not to different degrees of emphasis on grace itself, but rather to *different radicalisations* of the concept. Thus, it was never enough to declare, as Sanders did, that second temple Judaism was a religion of grace, since the disparate sources from that era diverge concerning this multifaceted concept by ‘perfecting’ different aspects of it.

Barclay proposes that the primary and most distinguishing aspect of χάρις in Paul undoubtedly is its *incongruity*, such that it is the claim that God gives regardless of the worth of the recipients that is unique and uniquely found in Paul. This perfecting of grace does not necessitate the other five perfectings included in Barclay’s taxonomy.

In Galatians, for example, the incongruity of grace is seen in that the apostle was called ‘through grace’ before birth (Gal 1:13–14; 2:15–16).³² The same holds true with regard to the addressees; they have come to God, not on the basis of their abilities, merits or knowledge, but due to ‘the grace of Christ’ (Gal 1:6). God’s calling is qualified by the expression ἐν χάριτι Χριστοῦ.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 70–5.

³¹Ibid., p. 569.

³²Ibid., p. 358.

From Romans Barclay stresses Paul's belief that God did not choose Abraham for any inherent worth; this was an incongruous act of election, paralleled in God's incongruous act of sending his Son. This incongruous giving is *the only thing* that constitutes God's family and the Christian life lived within it. Paul's position on following Jewish dietary laws in Romans 14 expresses this same point: such lifestyle choices are contingent upon circumstances and social conditions and not integral to the faith itself. The 'strong' believer of that chapter is the one who has dissociated his faith from every norm or value that is not derived from the gospel itself.³³

Barclay's findings involve three other of the 'perfectings' of grace present in Paul, though more peripherally: superabundance, priority and efficacy. Not present is the perfecting of non-circularity, which has emerged as an ideal of a pure gift in the modern world and stands in clear contrast to the Pauline notion of grace. For in Paul's view God gives and expects his giving to move the recipients to devout acts of reciprocity. This circularity of grace does not nullify grace as grace.³⁴ Neither should the return of the gift be regarded as a new gift, but as a *relational expression* of the gift given in the first place. In Barclay's own words (commentating on this matter in Galatians):

It is important to be clear. The life in which believers 'sow to the Spirit' is itself generated by the Christ-event through the Spirit (2:19–20; 5:25). The 'eternal life' promised as their 'inheritance' (cf. 3:29; 4:7) is *not a new gift* conditional on a self-generated life of obedience, but *the completion of the gift* by which they were granted status as heirs (4:1–6).³⁵

Titus, Barclay and the action of grace

Gift-giving as a hermeneutical lens for understanding grace in Paul will continue to inform the field; and the conversation should not be based solely on the undisputed Pauline canon of seven letters, as was often the case in earlier debates between proponents of the New Perspective and the advocates of the traditional perspective. The Pastorals should be on the table; they have a lot to tell us, whether about post-Pauline reception and reframing of Paul's thought, or about the late Paul himself.³⁶

Can Barclay's insights inform a reading of God's grace which performs ethical training? Can his newfound taxonomy shed analytical light upon grace as a training agent in Titus? I believe so. In the following, we will use Barclay's categories to grasp the linking of soteriology and ethical transformation in Titus.

Grace's *superabundance* is seen in that it appeared to 'all humans' with saving power (Tit 2:11). The *incongruity* of this divine giving is explicit in Titus 3, where the third verse depicts our pervasively sinful state, which is suddenly overturned by the contrasting 'but when God' in verse 4. God's initiative to reveal his goodness and love for humans is completely without any regard for previous value in the beneficiaries.

This aspect also surfaces in 2 Timothy 1:9, where both grace's priority and its incongruity are seen. God's saving and calling occurred prior to anything we did to show ourselves worthy; it was purposed by grace 'in Christ' from before the beginning of

³³Ibid., p. 515.

³⁴One may think of love shown that evokes a response of love in the other. It certainly does not forfeit its essence as love in compelling the other to respond lovingly.

³⁵Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, p. 441.

³⁶See Anderson, *Paul's New Perspective*, epub, ch. 5.

time, and now it has been revealed (φανερωθεῖσαν) in Christ Jesus the Saviour. This gift that God gives to the world, destroying death and bringing to life and immortality, comes with the attending phrase 'through the gospel', which seems to portray an open-ended giving, purposed from eternity, commenced in the first appearance of Christ, continuing with ongoing effects through the declarations of the gospel and coming to its climax in Christ's return.³⁷

The discourse from 2 Timothy 1 frames χάρις in relation to the Father's eternal giving, as well as Christ's historical appearance and the Spirit's ongoing presence. In the third chapter of Titus, the linking of God's historical salvific act and 'our' ongoing renewal is apparent; the two are practically merged. He 'saved us' when he revealed his goodness and love of humans (namely, in Christ), and this saving took place in a washing of new birth and renewal through the Holy Spirit. Both God's revelation in Christ and his regeneration of the human heart are here regarded as two facets of the same salvific act.

The divine giving is incongruous, but it is not non-circular. Barclay has shown from the anthropology of gifts that in antiquity these donations always came with the power and presence of the donor. Thus, the obligation of return, which is self-evident in the thought-world of the epistle to Titus, is not only due to the authority of the giver (in this case God), but also comes from the nature of gift-giving itself. Gifts in the Graeco-Roman era conveyed a powerful relational dynamic *precisely as gifts*. The notion of not expecting any form of return was alluring but uncommon in ancient thought.³⁸ Barclay shows that Paul, like Philo, could imagine a gift devoid of any expectations of return, as shown by his employment of the adverb δωρεῶν in Galatians 2:21; but he never advocated such a concept of grace. In Galatians and in Romans grace is circular. The letter to Titus exemplifies the same circularity of grace, as seen in Titus 2:12, 14 and 3.8.

Barclay stresses that the good life lived in obedience to God (i.e. the concrete manifestation of grace's circularity) is *not to be viewed as a new gift*, but as the expression of the grand gift given and received.³⁹ Also, from Titus and 2 Timothy we see that the proclamation of the gospel is one such expression, as well as the means by which the gift is passed on to others. It is both an expression of God's ongoing giving, through Word and Spirit, as well as the tool of the Spirit to bring the world back to God (cf. 1 Cor 12:3). All features of a life lived σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως καὶ εὐσεβῶς (Tit 2:11) should be viewed in light of God's giving (namely, Christ) received and expressed.

Barclay provides for us categories that further enable understanding of the reciprocity of grace as an expression of the *relationality* that is inseparable from God's great gift-giving. The expected return is much more than an objectification of social forces, because the Spirit of Christ himself is understood to be present in this new relational dynamism. Hence, when Paul turns from descriptions of what God has done to exhortations about what believers ought to do, he does not expect them to create a new existence, but rather to express what God has already done through Christ. Basing ethics in the Christ event is not merely a structure of epistolary rhetoric, but a new construal of reality itself.

³⁷ See Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 295.

³⁸ Philo argues for such an ideal devoid of any reciprocity. However, on other occasions, the God of Philo certainly expects return in the form of praise and gratitude. See Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, p. 74.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 440–1.

The Christian *koinonia* is, as Barclay concludes from his study of Galatians, the ongoing social expression of the divine giving. This relational setting is the presupposition of our pericope of interest; it is also a product caused by the Christ event. What peculiar relationship is understood to have originated from God's grace in Titus? The notion of 'a people' that is 'his very own' is conveyed in Titus 2:14b. Furthermore, the members of this people are 'born again' and 'becoming heirs' (Tit 3:5, 7). The kinship language alludes to children in a household in relationship to their Father. God's grace training us may be regarded as the upbringing of children to resemble their heavenly Father.⁴⁰

God's grace as parental authority is also what the semantics of *παιδεύουσα* seems to convey. The word is derived from *παῖς* and carries connotations of a parent rearing its child. The self-evident framework of such a fostering is the profound relational bonding that exists between the two parties, a relationship based on the gift of life. In a similar manner the gracious gift of God is eternal life to the believer, actualised by his life-giving Spirit indwelling the believer. The renewal from God's Spirit in Titus 3:5 can be practically synonymous with his *παιδεύουσα*. In the second chapter the fruit of this process is more ethically expressed, defined both negatively and positively; in the third chapter it is depicted as a new quality of divine life, through God's Spirit, resulting in our becoming heirs. The two instances are parallel in that both depict a divinely inspired transformation, resulting in a return of our lives back to God.

Titus 3 echoes Romans 8 (especially Romans 8:10), which speaks of this transformation analogously. Paul explains that a believer is, as Barclay frames it, *simul mortuus et vivens*, and this new quality of life is due to the Spirit's indwelling.⁴¹ This is also the Spirit of sonship, and life lived under his influence makes us heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ. The Spirit has been poured out upon this family of believers 'through Jesus Christ' (διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), and it is likely that the classical virtues mentioned in Titus 2:11 are to be understood christocentrically.⁴²

The *telos* of this active grace is in Titus 2:11 defined both negatively (that we would 'renounce ungodliness and worldly desires') and positively (that we would 'live soberly, and righteously and godly'). It is beyond the intent of this article to elaborate on the semantical fields of each of these terms. However, one notation should be made regarding the aim of the training.

The direct result of grace expressed in Titus 2:14 is not only good deeds per se, but having *zeal* (ζηλωτήν) for them, such that the will is drawn towards the good and is motivated by it. This stands in a stark contrast to ungodliness and worldly desires, which must be taken as the will defying the limits given by God. God's training of grace that flows from Christ's self-giving thus involves a transformation of the will. This is more than a change in external behaviour; it is a fruit of external behaviour that is informed and inspired by the God who gave Christ, the Christ who gave himself and the Spirit who has been poured out to be present in the Christian community.⁴³

⁴⁰ Adding 'Father' to 'God' in the greeting of Tit 1:4b puts God as Father to the forefront of the letter.

⁴¹ Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, p. 502.

⁴² Christ's action as not only the basis but also the guiding ethical principle is commonplace in Pauline argumentation. See e.g. Rom 15:2–3, 'let each of us please his neighbour...', for Christ did not please himself. Cf. v. 7, 'welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you'; see also 1 Cor 6:12ff. and 2 Cor 10:1.

⁴³ The letter ends by clarifying that good deeds prevent life from being 'unfruitful' (Tit 3.14).

Concluding thoughts

The epiphany of God's grace is in the letter to Titus christocentrically framed, pointing both to Christ's first appearance and to the Parousia; the ethical renewal of believers is contingent upon this and takes place in relation to both. The two soteriological kerygmata in the heart of the letter are in themselves semiotic examples of its emphasis on salvation and the proclamation thereof. They root the letter's ethical instruction in God's work of salvation, and ethical transformation is caused by this divine act. Thus, Titus 2:11–14 commences with the conjunction γάρ, connecting the kerygmatic saying to the preceding ethical instruction, and ends with the ζηλωτήν καλῶν ἔργων. The neighbouring kerygma in Titus 3:4–7 is set against the background of dissolute acts of paganism, to which it offers a soteriological response. Read together, these two passages might be understood as the soteriological soil in which faith needs to be rooted in order to lead a life that flourishes towards the good.

Barclay's anthropological approach to grace from the angle of gift-giving provides a new taxonomy of grace that is informative and enables us to better understand the soteriology of the entire *Corpus Paulinum*, not least the Pastoral Epistles. The epistle to Titus' two soteriological kerygmata, viewed through the lens of gift-giving, may be summarised as follows: God *reveals* his giving (Christ) to the world (Tit 2:11); Christ *gives* his life to redeem us and make of 'us' his very own people (Tit 2:14); God and Christ *pour out* the Spirit in abundance on 'us' (Tit 3.6); the Spirit *provides* new birth and renewal among the believers (Tit 3.5); believers *return* their lives of good deeds back to God (Tit 2.14 and 3.8); God again *reveals* his glory (identified with the glorified risen Christ) to the world at the final eschaton (Tit 2.13). The revelation of God's grace, goodness and love thus expresses in Titus a unilateral divine initiative analogous to Barclay's findings of Pauline incongruous grace in Galatians and Romans. This incongruity does not, however, entail a non-circularity of grace. Rather, the gift of grace evokes a reciprocity, and this reciprocity could be understood as an ongoing relational expression of the gift given by God.

Barclay's research helps us to understand the relationality that was an ongoing fruit of the giving and receiving of gifts in antiquity. Grace as a subject performing ethical training is one way of formulating this. God's transformative activity in grace does not eradicate the believer as an ethical subject. Rather, believers are drawn into the divine dynamism of giving, which is centred around Christ and implemented by the Spirit. Christ has appeared, and Christ will appear; and in the meantime, he must be revealed through gospel proclamation. Believers who in this way return their life back to God are not handing him a new gift. Rather, formed by God's active grace, they are shaped by his ongoing giving as they are expressing it.