

7-21-24 Every Good Work (Titus)

Week 5

Text: Titus 3:1–11

Topic(s): God's Will, God's Works, God's Love

Big Idea of the Message: Paul speaks about the good works of God.

Application Point: It is God's work in us that allows us to truly work.

Have you ever been reminded of your past? Ever ran into someone that knew you years ago? Or have gone to a family reunion to be reminded of how you once were or the dumb decisions you made in the past.

How about being reminded of who you are supposed to be?

We join Paul as he continues to instruct Titus as to what should be accomplished in the Church on Crete. In doing so Paul gives a great contrast between the "old man" and the "new man". Who better to describe the amazing transformation that Jesus can bring than Paul. His story is one of the greatest transformations in history. In the first few verses He calls on Titus to remind the people of Crete of what they had previously been taught. They too had been changed by the power of Christ. But it seems that they needed a reminder of certain responsibilities of this new life.

Read Titus 3:1-2.

Paul spells out seven characteristics that are good for us to keep in mind. This is probably not the first time you have heard of these, nor will it be the last; yet we are to be reminded of things we already know.

Therefore, I will always remind you about these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught. 2 Peter 1:12 NLT

Remember Who You Are

1. Be subject.

- Submission focuses not on personality but on position. Authority is an instrument in the hand of God.
- Andy Stanley offers a helpful perspective if we're struggling with submission to authorities, he says that the issue is not what but who. God has placed authority over us, and we are to submit to them even when we might disagree with what they are doing.

2. Be obedient.

- Submission starts with our attitude and obedience is the outward expression of that attitude. Cretans were notoriously rebellious and so Christian citizens needed to be reminded to be different.
- Guess who else is notoriously rebellious? Us!

- Having said that, there are times when we must follow God instead of government, as Peter stated in **Acts 5:29: “We must obey God rather than men!”** Daniel and his buddies refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar in **Daniel 3**.
- 3. Be ready to do good.**
 - The theme of doing good is sprinkled throughout the book of Titus because acts of kindness will demonstrate to a watching world that a Christian citizen operates according to a different set of values. We need to be prepared to do good when we have the opportunity, for it will cause people to **“glorify our Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16)**.
 - 4. Don’t speak evil.**
 - It’s so easy to slander or make disparaging remarks about those we disagree with, not only in the political realm, but also in the church. **Verse 2** states that we are **“to speak evil of no one.”** (Soooo hard!)
 - 5. Be peaceable.**
 - Have you ever noticed how angry and contentious (WE) can be? I’m grieved when I hear believers’ blasting away, especially at those who are not followers of Jesus that hold a different position.
 - We are to be people of peace, able to talk about issues, but not attackers of individuals.
 - 6. Be gentle.**
 - One commentator said, “the virtue of being gentle is “sweet reasonableness” that always gives others the benefit of the doubt. Free from harshness.
 - 7. Show humility.**
 - Instead of being proud people, Christians with dual citizenship must be humble as **Ephesians 4:2 says: “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,”**

Remember What You Were

Read Titus 3:3.

This verse begins with the phrase, **“For we ourselves were also once...”** In our past, we used to act just like those who don’t know Christ. We need to avoid spiritual arrogance and not look down on those who sin differently than we do. Many of us used to do the exact same thing. To respond properly to Cretan culture, we must remember our previous condition. Let’s look at this descriptive wording Paul used.

- 1. Foolish.**
 - A foolish person lacks understanding, or literally, one who is senseless or “not having a mind.” A person that doesn’t know Christ personally is described in **Ephesians 4:18: “Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him.” (NLT)**

- No matter how smart someone is, if they are not alive spiritually, they are considered foolish. **Proverbs 10:23: “Doing wrong is like a joke to a fool, but wisdom is pleasure to a man of understanding.**

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good. Psalm 14:1 ESV

2. Disobedient.

- A person apart from Christ is by nature rebellious, willfully disregarding authority. This word refers to one who refuses to be persuaded, or one who persists in doing what he wants to do, no matter what God says.

Jonathon Edwards, every unbeliever is hanging by a thread over the fires of hell. And the only thing that keeps them from falling into the flames is the hand of God. Disobedience is nothing more than saying to God, “I dare you to let go”

3. Deceived.

- We are all prone to wander. **1 Peter 2:25** says that before we were saved, we were **“like sheep going astray...”**
- **Jeremiah 17:9** was written with him in mind: **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”** MY biggest problem is not with other people; MY biggest problem is with MY own heart.
- Satan, the ultimate deceiver, works at keeping people in the dark as stated in **2 Corinthians 4:4: “Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don’t understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.” (NLT)**
- We need to remind ourselves often, non-followers of Christ are NOT the enemy, they are victims of the enemy.

4. Slaves to lust, passions and sinful pleasures.

- Jesus taught in **John 8:34** that those who sin become **“slaves to sin.”** The nature of sin is that it will make you, its slave. Like the country of Crete, our culture is filled with **“various”** kinds of passions and pleasures, and these sins will enslave as **2 Peter 2:19** teaches: **“...for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.”**
- The word, **“various”** refers to a diversity (plethora) of longings and unhealthy pleasures. **“Pleasure”** is from the root word that is translated **“hedonism,”** which is the belief that indulgence is the chief end of life.
- We hear this all the time. People say things like, “I just want to be happy” or “I deserve to have fun” or “I just gotta be me!” Those who want freedom to do whatever they want will eventually end up in bondage to that which they are pursuing.

5. Lived in malice.

- Malice is repugnant rottenness that is directed at someone else. A malicious man is one who desires to destroy or causes distress and rejoices in doing so.

6. Envy.

- Envy is not just wanting what another person has, but also resenting that person for having it. An envious person is never satisfied with what he or she has and will crave continually for more.

A sound heart is life to the body, But envy is rottenness to the bones. Proverbs 14:30

- If you're envious of others, the one you will hurt the most by your actions will be yourself.

7. Hateful.

- The word "hate" means loathsome and detestable. When one lives in slavery to passions and pleasures, others will eventually come to hate him and in turn, this individual will find hatred for another. Hating becomes a way of life and often can't even be explained.

This is a diagnosis of human depravity. Is there such a thing as evil? Yes, there is, and it lurks within each of us. The bad news is that we are sinners. The good news is that there is a Savior. You must first recognize the fact that you are a sinner before you will receive the work of the Savior into your life.

Read Titus 3:4-7.

Verse 4 begins with a jaw clenching truth about our per-conversion condition. We are in the depths of depravity but the Almighty intervened and saved us.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary remarks that Paul's contrast is startling. In **verse 3**, man is the actor, but in **verses 4-7**, man is merely the recipient and God becomes the actor. What man could in no wise do for himself, God initiated for him. Notice that God is the one who takes the initiative: **"But...of God...He saved us...according to His mercy...He saved us...the Holy Spirit...He poured...through Jesus...by His grace...might become heirs."**

In the original language these four verses are really one long sentence, and many commentators believe that this was a creed that the early Christians recited, or even sang out loud. Through repetition, they committed it to memory.

We are a mess and in distress and God has come to our rescue through the redeeming work of His Son on the Cross. At its essence, Christianity teaches conversion through a rescuing relationship. We are lost and therefore must be found. We are enemies of God and need to be at peace. We are enslaved and need to find freedom. We are saved from God's wrath by God's redemption.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 1 Timothy 1:15

1. We are Rescued by His love. (v.4)

- God shows us extraordinary and extravagant love, not because we deserve it, but because we don't. God not only feels love toward you; He focused His love through the sending of His Son.
- Next time you are struggling to feel God's love remember **Zephaniah 3:17**.

For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.” (NLT)

2. We are Rescued by His mercy. (v.5)

- **Verse 5** is an excellent verse to remember when someone says that they are trying to get to heaven by their own efforts: **“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.”** We need mercy because as we learned in **verse 3**, we are in a miserable condition. Instead of moving toward God, we are moving away from Him.
- You and I are not saved by anything we do. It's all because of His magnificent mercy.

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ Phillipians 3:8

We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind. Isaiah 64:6

- We need mercy because we are in the cesspool of our sins and the filth of even our good deeds. I love how **Micah 7:18** captures God's mercy.

Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy.

3. We are Rescued by His Son.

- Our salvation is possible only because of the finished work of “Jesus Christ our Savior.” God's justice had to be satisfied and since the penalty for sin is death, all the sins of the world were placed on Christ and He paid the price as our sin substitute.

4. We are Rescued by His grace.

- Grace is God's unmerited favor that pardons us from our guilt. You and I don't deserve to be forgiven but grace grants us freedom.
- Grace is scandalous. It's hard to accept, hard to believe, and hard to receive. Grace shocks us in what it offers. It is truly not of this world.
- Grace teaches us that God does for others what we would never do for them. We would save the not-so-bad Grace is a gift that costs everything to the giver and nothing to the receiver. It is given to those who don't deserve it, barely recognize it, and hardly appreciate it. That's why God alone gets the glory in your salvation. Jesus did all the work when he died on the cross.

- In the end grace means that no one is too bad to be saved. God specializes in saving bad people. Do you have some things in your background that you would be ashamed to talk about in public? Fear not. God knows all about it, and His grace is greater than your sin.
- Grace also means that some people may be too good to be saved. That is, they may have such a high opinion of themselves that they think they don't need God's grace. God's grace cannot help you until you are desperate enough to receive it.

Conclusion

Three results of receiving Christ as Lord and Savior.

1. Justified (v.7)

Warren Wiersbe defines it this way: "Justification is the gracious act of God whereby He declares a believing sinner righteous because of the finished work of Christ on the cross. God puts to our account the righteousness of His Son, so that we can be condemned no more."

2. Heirs (v.7)

- Do you know that if you're saved, you are in line for an incredible inheritance? You don't deserve this, but you will receive it, again because of His grace. We are beneficiaries of His blessings. This word in the Greek was a legal term. Because of what Christ has done for you, you are an heir of the Holy One.

3. Given the hope of eternal life. (v.7).

- Eternal life begins the moment you are saved. When you die, you will leave the tent of your body, but you will live forever. You can count on the promise of Jesus from **John 10:28: "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand."**

What About You?

In **verse 3**, Paul describes what believers used to be. I wonder this morning if some of you are still in your sins. Perhaps you have not yet received the gift of eternal life. God has done everything for you, but you need to respond to Him by placing your full faith and trust in Him. What side are you on?

You can do that right now by praying this prayer: "Lord Jesus, for too long I've kept you out of my life. I admit that I am a sinner and that I cannot save myself. I am foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved, filled with malice, struggle with envy and find myself hating others. I repent of my sins by changing my mind about the way I've been living. I'm not going to close the door when I hear you knocking. I believe and gratefully receive your pardon. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for coming to earth. With all my heart I believe you are the Son of God who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead on the third day. Thank you for bearing my sins and giving me the gift of eternal life. I am so grateful for your kindness, love, mercy, regeneration, Spirit, Son, and grace. I receive you into my heart. I confess that you are now Lord in my life. Make me into the person you want me to be. I'm a sinner. You're the Savior. And now I surrender to you. Amen."

Sought after (Isa. 62:12) Precious in his sight (Isa. 43:4) A new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)
Not condemned (Rom. 8:1) Forgiven (Col. 1:14) Loved (1 John 3:1) Accepted (Rom. 15:7) **A child
of God** (John 1:12) **Jesus' friend** (John 15:14) **Free** (John 8:36) The temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19)
God's treasured possession (Deut. 7:6) Complete in Christ (Col. 2:10 NLT) Chosen (Col. 3:12)
Called (2 Tim. 1:9) An ambassador of the Most High God (2 Cor. 5:20) God's masterpiece (Eph.
2:10 NLT) Able to do all things through Christ, who gives you strength (Phil. 4:13) More than a
conqueror through Jesus, who loves you (Rom. 8:37)