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C1212 – April 11, 2012 – Titus 3:3-8
The Kindness Of God

Two weeks ago we talked about Titus 3:1-3. We said that verse 1 is talking about our interaction as believers with the governing authorities – our local, state and federal authorities. It tells us that we are to be subject to and obedient to our governing authorities and be ready, willing and able to take advantage of every opportunity to be of service to them – to do good works. The only exception being when obedience to our governing authorities means disobedience to God. In that case, like Peter said in Acts 5:29, we must obey God rather than man. But even then, we are to submit to the consequences of our refusal to obey the government.

Verse 2 broadens the scope of Paul's instructions to include our interaction with everyone – believers and unbelievers – with the focus on our interaction with the unbelieving world. Verse 2 tells us we should not malign anyone – we should not speak maliciously - in a way that is meant to hurt or harm someone. We should be peaceable - not contentious or quarrelsome – gentle towards others, not severe – and we should demonstrate every consideration for all men – meaning, in all respects, in all dealings with all people – believers and unbelievers – we are to be considerate to them. We all have problems being this way – even with our own believing brothers and sisters, much less with unbelievers. However, as we discussed, it is very important to treat unbelievers this way, because, if we do, we will stand out – in a good way, not a bad way. We will be a bright light in worldly darkness, we will do honor – and not damage - to the gospel and the name of Christ. We always have to remember that our behavior matters, that unbelievers are watching, and how we show ourselves to the world affects our witness, our ability to minister to others, how the gospel is perceived, and the reputation of Christ. And there is another reason we should behave this way – a doctrinal reason – a reason that is based on what God did for us while we were yet sinners and

God's attitude toward men as demonstrated in what He did for us. Paul explains this in verses 3-7 – the verses we will talk about tonight.

First, why do we need a doctrinal basis for this behavior? Why can't we just get the command to treat unbelievers with every consideration and obey it? Why is it important to understand why we should treat them this way? We talked about this when we discussed the doctrinal passage in Titus 2:11-15. Doctrine has power – the Holy Spirit uses it to enable us to behave. Doctrine is God's revelation about reality – it tells us something about reality that, if we know it and believe it, it motivates us – it motivates our behavior. Sound doctrine motivates us to godly behavior. Bad doctrine motivates us to bad behavior. Look at the Westboro Baptist Church – the church that protests at the funerals of fallen soldiers – that is bad behavior motivated by bad doctrine. So - what we know and believe about reality determines how we behave, it determines our attitudes about how we behave. It sets the foundation for our obedience and, by doing so, gives us the correct orientation – the correct attitude – about it. It gets our heads straight. That is why we must get our doctrine right and that is why Paul uses doctrine as the foundation for his instructions on how to live godly lives.

Let's read the whole passage. **Titus 3:1-8 - ¹ Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, ² to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. ³ For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. ⁴ But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared, ⁵ He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life. ⁸ This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.**

As we just said - Titus 3:3 is the beginning of Paul's doctrinal rationale for the way the Cretans – and all believers - are to behave as Paul has instructed them in verses 1 and 2. The first point Paul makes is to remind the Cretans (and all of us) that we all were formerly unbelievers and by nature were just like them. Paul says we were all like this. He describes the way we were before we were saved – we were foolish, dull and without understanding; disobedient to God; led astray, deceived, deluded; slaves to all kinds of cravings and pleasures; living our lives in depravity and envy of others; hateful, loathsome, despicable, detesting each other. Unbelievers are spiritually dead, by their nature are children of wrath, and they walk like it. Titus 3:3 tells us what that walk looks like. And we were just like them – by our very nature – we were like this. We could be nothing else and we could do nothing about it. We were without direction, without hope. In many cases, we didn't know how bad off we were. In other cases, we knew things were bad, but relied on our own devices to try somehow to overcome it or anesthetize ourselves against it. We were lost.

Then something happened. And this something is described in verses 4-7. As we go through these verses, we need to notice two big things about what happened – First, what the passage says about who did this and why. Second, what the passage says about God's attitude toward men in doing what He did.

Now, let's get into verse 4 and the first part of verse 5. It says - **4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us.** Let's stop there for a minute.

In Titus 3:3, Paul describes how he, Titus and the Cretan believers were once foolish and lost like the every other unbeliever. But, they were changed. They aren't like that anymore. What happened? The beginning of verse 5 tells us – God saved them. What does this mean? Remember what we talked about before – that the word “saved” is a theologically loaded term that you have to be careful not to read something into it that isn't there in the context. It is not a technical term. It means “save, rescue, or deliver”. So the question that you always ask when you see the word “saved” in a passage is this – in the context of a particular passage, what are you being saved, rescued or delivered from? In some passages, it means being saved from physical harm. In other passages, it means justification – being saved from the penalty of

sin. In other passages, it means experiential sanctification – being saved from the power of sin. In other passages, it means ultimate sanctification – being saved from the presence of sin (when we are raptured or resurrected, receive our immortal bodies and live with Christ). Sometimes it can include several of these meanings. You have to look at the context of the particular passage to try to figure it out. So – in context – in verse 5 – what were Paul, Titus and the Cretan believers saved or delivered from? What does verse 3 say they were before they were saved? Like the unbelievers – foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to sin. So – they were delivered out of this condition – out of their slavery to sin – out of the power of sin. God delivered them from this condition. They are no longer like unbelievers – they don't have to be enslaved to sin. The same thing happened to us when we believed. We were saved – we were rescued – we were delivered from the power of sin over us. We no longer have to be slaves to sin – we can be something else.

Notice who it says saved us – God saved us. He is our Savior. He is the architect of the plan. We didn't save ourselves. God the Father purposed it and accomplished it in history through the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension and secession of the Son, Jesus Christ - and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. All three persons of the Trinity were involved in our salvation.

Also notice what His attitude was toward men when He did this – He saved us out of His kindness and love for mankind. “Kindness” means “goodness, kindness, generosity”. The quality of being helpful or beneficial. “Love for mankind” is one word “φιλανθρωπία”. It means “affectionate concern for and interest in humanity”. The English word “philanthropy” comes from this word. So – God had (and has) an attitude of kindness and love for mankind. And, verse 4 tells us this attitude “appeared” in history – God's kindness and love was expressed – made its appearance. God doesn't change, His kindness and love are always there, but He did something in history that demonstrated his kindness and love.

The word “appeared” is the same word we ran across in Titus 2:11. It is “ἐπιφαίνω” and it means “show oneself, make an appearance”. We get our English word “epiphany” from this word. Remember we said that *“The word conveys ideas of the sudden and surprising appearance of light, of its entrance*

for the first time, and of its effect in illuminating those in darkness”¹. Notice also that “appeared” is in the past tense – it is in the Greek aorist tense – which means that the expression of God’s kindness and love had occurred at a point in time before Paul wrote Titus.

Once again, like Titus 2:11, we are confronted with the question – when did “God’s kindness and love for mankind” make its appearance. What is this referring to? Once again, I don’t know for sure. However, since this whole passage is so focused on what God has done, I think this is talking about when God acted in history to make our salvation possible. This is when His kindness and love for mankind appeared. So - I think that it is probably referring to the appearance of Christ in history. The accomplishing in history of everything that God did for us, through Christ, to make our salvation possible - Christ’s incarnation, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension, session and pouring out of the Holy Spirit. This is what He did that saved us. Not just our justification – our initial salvation from our sins. Not just our experiential sanctification – delivery from the power of sin. And not just our ultimate sanctification – the delivery from the presence of sin. All of it. All aspects of our salvation were made possible by what God has already done in history. This is when His kindness and love for mankind appeared.

Let’s move on to verse 5. It says - **5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit...**” This verse points out very clearly that we were not saved by anything we did. Nothing. Now, I need to point something out about the word order in the Greek New Testament in this verse. Verse 5 in the New American Standard Bible, starts out with the phrase “He saved us” – which – because it is the first thing in the verse - seems to me to emphasize that fact – He saved us. So – the word order in the NASB tends to emphasize “He saved us.” However, there is something interesting about the word order in the Greek New Testament. The phrase “He saved us” does not appear until later in the verse.

¹ I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 267.

The word order in the Greek reads like this – “not out of works of righteousness which we ourselves did but according to His mercy He saved us”. Notice that, before Paul ever gets to the phrase, “He saved us”, he emphasizes two things – first, what was not the basis for our salvation – our works – and second, what was the basis for our salvation – His mercy. He didn’t save us because of anything we did. He did save us because of who He is. We couldn’t do any righteous works that would merit God’s salvation from our former state. We couldn’t save ourselves and we couldn’t do anything to earn His favor. We didn’t earn anything and He didn’t owe it to us to do anything. The word order in Greek makes this very clear – it is right at the beginning of the verse – “not because of works which we ourselves did” - and the “we ourselves” is emphatic – “we” is basically referred to twice. It’s nothing that “we ourselves” did. We had nothing to do with it. Paul wants to make sure we get that point and he puts it right at the beginning of the verse.

On what basis did He save us, then, according to this verse? His mercy. That is it. “Mercy” is kindness or concern expressed for someone in need – other words are “compassion, pity”. Not giving someone what they deserve, but giving them what they need, even though they deserve something else. It is related to grace – unmerited favor. Notice that it is kindness or concern expressed for “someone in need”. Were we in need before we became believers? You bet. So – before we were saved, we were lost – enslaved to sin – in the condition described in Titus 3:3. We could not do anything to help ourselves. Nothing. Without hope. But, He saved us anyway – because of what – His mercy. It was an expression of His kindness, concern, compassion and pity toward us.

So – in addition to kindness and love, we add another quality of God that is expressed towards men – mercy. In verse 4, His kindness and love were emphasized. In verse 5, His mercy is emphasized. So, in these two verses Paul has already pointed out two things – God saved us, we did nothing to deserve it, and He did it as an expression of His kindness, love and mercy. Romans 5 also describes this – Look at **Romans 5:6–8 - ⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died**

for us. Notice – we were helpless, we were ungodly, we were sinners. But Christ died for us anyway. Not because of anything we did, but because of God. That is love, that is kindness, that is mercy.

Let's move on. The rest of verse 5 describes what God did to us to deliver us from our condition. It says He saved us on the basis of His mercy **“by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit...”** The Greek word translated “washing” means “bath or washing”. The word is also used in **Ephesians 5:25–27 - ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.** “Washing” means spiritual cleansing – cleansing from sin. God washed us – cleansed us from sin.

The word translated “regeneration” is a compound word meaning “new genesis”, or “rebirth”, or “born again”. It can be defined this way - the action of the Holy Spirit whereby He imparts eternal life to human beings. It's talking about a mysterious something that instantaneously is done when a person trusts in Jesus Christ – it's not a process – at a moment in time a spiritual birth takes place – when we believed we were spiritually born – we were given spiritual life. It reminds you of John 3:3 where Christ tells Nicodemus **John 3:3 - ³ Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”** In John 3:3, “born again” means “born from above” which not only emphasizes the new birth, but the source of the new birth – God. Just like our passage.

Titus 3:5 tells us we were also renewed. I'm not sure what the difference is between regeneration and renewal. They seem to be saying the same thing. Another passage using this word is **Romans 12:2 - ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.** Now – I need to be clear - the passage in Romans is not talking about the same thing Titus is - it uses renewal to describe a reorientation of our way of thinking. It may be that – in Titus - Paul could be using it in a similar way – he may be using “renewal” to

express our new orientation for living as a result of our spiritual rebirth. However, I'm just speculating.

Notice who is involved in our spiritual rebirth – the end of verse 5 tells us it is the Holy Spirit. And verse 6 tells us that the Holy Spirit has been poured out richly on us. **Verse 6 says - ⁶ whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior...** “Poured out” means “caused to be emitted in quantity” and by itself – without any other word added - it means that the Holy Spirit has been poured out on us profusely. But Paul adds another word to describe this pouring out for emphasis. He adds the word “richly” or “abundantly”. So – the profuse pouring out of the Spirit is done richly, abundantly. Paul is emphasizing that God wasn't stingy with the Holy Spirit – He was poured out on us profusely, richly, abundantly, when we were saved. You get the mental picture of being drenched with the Holy Spirit. Notice also that the term “poured out” is in the aorist tense – it happened at a point in time in the past. When did this happen? When He saved us – through washing, regeneration and renewal – not later, and not in stages. All at once. When we were saved.

Notice also who is involved in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. Look at verse 6 again -⁶ **whom He - [referring to God] - poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior...** - All three Persons of the Trinity are referred to in this verse. God the Father poured out the Spirit on us richly “through Jesus Christ our Savior”. Jesus Christ was the person through whom God the Father poured out the Spirit. This is what Peter refers to at Pentecost **Acts 2:33 - ³³ “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.** Notice that Christ received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and then Christ “poured forth” the Spirit. Christ was the Person through whom God poured out the Holy Spirit on us.

So – let's summarize what verses 5 and 6 tell us God has done for us. He cleansed us from sin, gave us new spiritual life, and renewed us. All this happened at once – we became something new. We are new creatures created by Him through the work of the Holy Spirit. Who God poured out on us profusely – abundantly – through Jesus Christ our Savior. This is also described in **2 Corinthians 5:17 - ¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he**

is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Here's what Dr. Tom Constable, Senior Professor Emeritus of Bible Exposition at Dallas Theological Seminary, said about our being new creatures. He said *"Whenever a person experiences conversion, as Paul did, he or she really becomes a new person. It is not just his or her viewpoint that should change and can change, but many things really do change. Certain old conditions and relationships no longer exist, and others take their place and continue. Obviously there is both continuity and discontinuity that takes place at conversion (justification). Paul was not denying the continuity. We still have the same physical features, basic personality, genetic constitution, parents, susceptibility to temptation, sinful environment, etc. These things do not change. Paul was stressing the elements of discontinuity: perspectives, prejudices, misconceptions, enslavements, etc. God adds many new things at conversion including new spiritual life, the Holy Spirit, forgiveness, the righteousness of Christ, as well as new viewpoints. The Christian is a new creature in this sense. Before conversion we did not possess the life-giving Holy Spirit who now lives within us. We had only our sinful human nature. Now we have both our sinful human nature and the indwelling Holy Spirit. This addition makes us an essentially new person since the Holy Spirit's effects on the believer are so far-reaching. We also possess many other riches of divine grace that contribute to our distinctiveness as believers"*²

Verse 7 tells us why God did this for us. It is a statement of His purpose or goal. Let's read it - **⁷ so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.** Notice that this is the first place in our passage that justification is mentioned. "Justified" is a legal term – it means "to render a favorable verdict – vindicate. This is in the aorist tense – so it should be translated "having been justified" – meaning that we have been justified – we are not being justified. We have been justified. On what basis does the verse say we have been justified – by grace – unmerited favor – the action of one who volunteers to do something that he is not obligated to do. Once again, we were not justified because of anything we did. We were justified because of God's grace – His favor towards us that we didn't earn and didn't deserve. He did it out of His grace. Like **Ephesians 2:8-9 says - ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and**

² Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), 2 Co 5:17.

that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God;* ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. And Romans 4:4–5 - ⁴ Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. ⁵ But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness... God justified us because of His grace – not because of our merit, our works, nothing. God did it for us because of who He is, not because of what we were.

So – what does the rest of verse 7 tells us about why He acted out of His kindness, love, mercy and grace, to save us? – to justify us, wash us, regenerate us, make us new – it says He did it so that **“we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”** What does this mean? I’m not sure. “Heirs” are beneficiaries – like the heirs of an estate or the heirs that receive something under a Will. An “heir” is someone that entitled to receive a bequest – something of value – because of their relationship to the person who left it to them. And remember that “hope” doesn’t mean “hope” in the sense that “I hope it will happen”. It means “hope” in the sense that “I know it will happen”. Confident expectation. “Eternal life” is not just quantity of life – that we merely exist forever – that is not eternal life, that is eternal existence. Everyone has eternal existence. Unbelievers in the lake of fire will have eternal existence, but that is not eternal life. That is eternal death. Eternal life is something unbelievers do not have – it is the ultimate in quality of life – the highest, fullest, kind of life – truly living. In the context of our passage “eternal life” is not talking about something that we fully experience now, it is talking about something that we will experience in the future. In other passages, we are said to have eternal life now – Christ said in **John 3:36 - ³⁶ “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”** – and by abiding in Christ we can experience this type of life to a certain degree now - but we don’t fully experience eternal life until later. What I think Paul is saying in this passage is that God washed us, regenerated us and renewed us to make us into heirs – beneficiaries – entitled to fully receive eternal life in the future. It is certain – and because it is certain we have it - but we won’t fully experience it until later. When will this occur? When we experience our ultimate sanctification – when we die (or are raptured) and we receive our resurrection bodies, no longer battle with our old sin nature, and we live in fellowship with Christ. Then we will truly have life.

So – let’s summarize Paul’s argument in verses 1-7. First, in verses 1 and 2 he tells us how we are to interact with governmental authorities and the pagan world. We are to be subject to governmental authorities, obedient to them and ready, willing and able to serve them. With regard to all men – particularly unbelievers – we should not malign anyone – we should not speak maliciously - in a way that is meant to hurt or harm someone. We should be peaceable - not contentious or quarrelsome – gentle towards others, not severe – and we should demonstrate every consideration for all men – meaning, in all respects, in all dealings with all people – believers and unbelievers – we are to be considerate – show them every consideration. In verse 3-7 Paul gives us doctrinal truth which should motivate us to behave this way toward the unbelieving world. First, he reminds us that when we were unbelievers we were foolish and lost – enslaved to sin – just like them. Then he points out that - because of nothing we ourselves did – nothing – God delivered us out of that condition and changed us. He justified us, washed us of our sin, gave us new spiritual life and renewed us, - made us into something new – and made us beneficiaries entitled to eternal life - with the confident expectation that ultimately He will deliver us from the presence of sin and we will have eternal life – the highest quality of life – life in His presence and without sin. And, once again, we did nothing to deserve this – He did it all, through Jesus Christ and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. So – we cannot say that He did it because we were better than the other unbelievers in the world – we weren’t better than them – we have no reason to be arrogant towards unbelievers – we have every reason to be compassionate towards them because they are still dead, enslaved to sin, children of wrath. And we may be the vessel through whom God chooses to work to deliver them. Also, this passage is very clear about why God did this for us. He did it as an expression of His kindness, love, mercy and grace. God has this attitude toward men and He expressed it in what He has done in history through Jesus Christ and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. So – if the One who delivered us has this attitude toward mankind – kindness, love, mercy and grace – even though none of us deserve it - who are we to have a different attitude. That would be the height of arrogance – regarding men differently than God does. God will eventually express His wrath toward those who have rebelled and rejected Him, but that is His doing in His timing. Now, we are to imitate Him and demonstrate kindness, love, mercy and grace to unbelievers – we are to show every consideration to all men.

Even though they may not deserve it. Especially if they don't deserve it. That's pretty hard to do. But that is what we are commanded to do.

Let's move on to verse 8. In verse 8, Paul ends this part of the passage with another charge to Titus. It says - ⁸ **This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.**

He starts by stating that the doctrine he just presented is a "trustworthy statement". He does this to emphasize that we can count on what he just said. The truth of this doctrine is emphasized – it is not to be taken lightly. It is to be taken to heart and acted upon.

One interesting thing to note about Paul's use of the phrase "trustworthy statement" is that it is a common expression used by Paul in the Pastoral Epistles. The phrase "trustworthy statement" is a "citation-emphasis" formula, and is one of five citation-emphasis formulas in the Pastoral Epistles. The others are found in 1 Tim. 1:15, 1 Timothy 3:1, 1 Timothy 4:9 and 2 Tim. 2:11. When you see this phrase, it may indicate that some sort of "saying" circulating within the early church is being cited – the citation - and that Paul is commending the saying as "trustworthy". ³ There is some debate about whether or not this is the case with Titus 3:8, and if he is, what portions of Titus 3 are part of this saying. Whether it is or not, Paul is certainly emphasizing the trustworthiness – the truth – of the doctrine he just got through communicating in verses 4-7. Like I said this is an interesting thing to notice and think about, but it really doesn't affect the interpretation of the passage.

He goes on to say that, concerning these things he wants Titus to speak confidently. What things does Paul want Titus to speak about? Not just the doctrine in verses 4-7, but all of the things Paul said in Titus 3:1-3. All these things go together – the way they are supposed to interact with civil authority, the way they are supposed to interact with other believers and the

³ George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles : A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1992), 347.

doctrinal rationale that provides the basis for this behavior. Not only does Paul want Titus to speak about these things, Paul wants him to speak “confidently”. The Greek word for “confidently” includes the idea of “insist”. Titus is not just to speak with confidence; he is to insist on these things. Paul is essentially commanding Titus to speak about these things, with the intention that, after Titus leaves, the leadership of the Cretan churches will understand the importance of the teaching and stress it as well. This applies to our church as well – we need to make sure that we teach these things, and that we insist that all of us behave accordingly.

Verse 8 tells why it is so important that Titus, and the churches, stress these things in their teaching - **so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds.**⁴ These teachings concerning behavior and doctrine are intended to motivate believers to “engage in good deeds” – to do good deeds. That is how we show “every consideration to all men.” The way this portion of the passage is written in the Greek emphasizes the responsibility of the believers a little more than what comes across in the NASB translation. Paul stresses the idea that, as believers, we are to be actively pursuing good deeds. It is very clear that these teachings are to motivate believers to be proactive. Not just sit back and wait, but actively pursue – be intent on and concerned about – doing good deeds. We are to make it our business to do good.

As I have pointed out several times, “Good deeds” are referred to 6 times in this short book. Remember **Titus 2:14** – in that verse we are told that we are to be zealots for good deeds. Our responsibility to engage in good deeds is made very clear in this book. You can’t get around it. What are good deeds? They are our fruit. They are the tangible product of our walking in the Spirit. They are manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit referred to in **Galatians 5:22–23** -²² **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**²³ **gentleness, self-control....** They are the opposite of the manifestations of walking in the flesh. We produce good deeds when we walk in the Spirit. If we aren’t walking in the Spirit we don’t produce good deeds – because we are walking in the flesh. When we are walking in the Spirit, He will use us for good deeds – whatever those things

⁴ *New American Standard Bible : 1995 Update* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), Tt 3:8.

may be. We will be zealots for good deeds. We will be careful to engage in good deeds. We will look for all the opportunities we can to produce fruit.

The last sentence of verse 8 tells us something else - **These things are good and profitable for men.** What are “these things” being referred to in verse 8? They are all the things in verses 1-7 - the way we are supposed to interact with civil authority, the way we are supposed to interact with other believers and the doctrinal rationale that provides the basis for this behavior. All of these things are good and, to the extent believers obey and make it their business to do good deeds, they are “profitable” – meaning beneficial or useful – to men, including unbelievers. This brings the thought all the way back to the first part of Chapter 3 where we are instructed how to interact with unbelievers. If we behave in the way we are supposed to, it will benefit all men, including these unbelievers we are to show every consideration for.

To sum all of this up - When we were unbelievers we were spiritually dead, enslaved to sin. Because of nothing we ourselves did, God delivered us out of that condition and changed us. He justified us, washed us of our sin, gave us new spiritual life, and made us beneficiaries of eternal life. God did it all for us, through Jesus Christ and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. He did it as an expression of His kindness, love, mercy and grace. God has this attitude toward men and He expressed it in what He has done in history through Jesus Christ and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. So - we have no reason to be arrogant towards unbelievers – we were just like them until God saved us – and we should show them compassion because they are still enslaved to sin. We should also imitate God and demonstrate kindness, love, mercy and grace to unbelievers. Knowing these things should motivate us to submit to governmental authorities, to be obedient to them and ready, willing and able to serve them. It should also motivate us to avoid speaking maliciously about anyone, to avoid being contentious or quarrelsome, and to show every consideration to everyone. These things are true. We should insist on them. And we should look for every opportunity to do good for everyone. All these things are good and beneficial to men.

Before we close, I would like to read another passage that is similar to this one and describes what God did for us. Turn to **Ephesians 2:3-10** - **³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of**

wrath, even as the rest. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

[Back To The Top](#)

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