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**Thursday, November 16, 2023 • Read Titus 3:3–8**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What seven things were “we ourselves once” (v3)? What appeared (v4)? Not by what did it appear (v5)? But according to what? What did God do? Through what? What did God do with His Spirit (v6)? Onto whom? How much? Through Whom? What did His grace accomplish (v7a)? What did this make us? According to what hope? What kind of saying is v8? What does the apostle (by the Spirit) want them to constantly do with it? About which people is he talking in this verse? What should they be careful to maintain? What results do good works produce for men?*

**What has turned foolish rebels into careful maintainers of good works?** Titus 3:3–8 prepares us for the second serial reading in public worship on the Lord’s Day. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **righteous works do not come from righteous works, but from divine kindness and mercy that necessarily produces righteous works.**

**Terrible sinners.** Justification is one part of God’s marvelous salvation of terrible sinners. And “terrible sinners” is what we all start out as (v3). “Foolish”—those who say in our hearts that there is no God. “Disobedient”—those whose wickedness resists restraining by authority. “Deceived”—those whose minds resist the truth of God, living and worshiping according to our own ideas instead. “Serving various lusts and pleasures”—dominated by desires instead of delighting in God’s goodness that is the proper object of proper desire. “Living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another”—our hostility to God spilling over in all manner of hostile thought and action toward those made in His image.

**Justification.** So, it ought to be obvious that God saving us is “not by works of righteousness which we have done”—such a thing could never save us because apart from God’s kindness and love and mercy (v5a), such a thing doesn’t exist! When God became man “the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared” in the person of the Lord Jesus (v4).

**Regeneration.** But there is also a glorious moment in the life of every elect person where “the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man” appears. According to God’s mercy (not our or others’ effort, not our or others’ wisdom), He saves “through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (v5b). Absolutely necessary, because of the completeness of our condition from v3. And absolutely free because of the perfection of God’s character from v4. God makes us NEW!

**Union with Christ.** But how can the righteous God give such a work, of such a Spirit, to such sinners as we are? v6 answers, “through Jesus Christ our Savior.” The perfection of Christ in our stead is such that through Him, God’s giving us His Spirit is described here as an “abundant pouring out on us”! Upon those elected in Christ the Spirit is poured out by Christ, to bring us into Christ and His righteousness (v7a), so that we can inherit glory with Christ forever (v7b).

**From folly and disobedience to wisdom and good works.** Now... you may have run into the idea (or even, from your own flesh, had the idea) that emphasizing Christians’ good works is somehow incompatible with emphasizing God’s grace. But nothing could be more opposite the truth! For the God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who finds us in the condition in v3 is too gracious, too powerful, too good to leave us in that condition.

When God justifies us with Himself, in Christ, by the work of His Spirit, He makes us to live expectantly, as those who have a sure hope of eternal life. He makes us into those who live by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Those who live under the washing work of the Holy Spirit. Those who now do those works of righteousness. They go from foolish and deceived (v3) to believing in God (v8). They go from disobedient, self-indulgent, and hateful (v3) to carefully maintain good works that benefit others (v8).

**What Christians must carefully do, and preachers must constantly affirm.** This is why you must maintain good works. This is why you must *be careful* to maintain good works. This is why preachers *must affirm* that those who have believed in God must be careful to maintain good works. This is why preachers *must constantly* affirm that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works (v8). It is good and profitable men to hear and embrace the whole gospel, leaving out no part of God’s great salvation in Christ, by His Spirit.

What were you, apart from Christ? How could you come to be in Christ? What difference has this made in what you hope for? What difference has it made in the strength of that hope? What difference has it been making in your living?

*Sample prayer: Kind and loving God, You have saved us, not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to Your mercy. But we have lived as if we are still in our folly and sin—as if the gracious work of the triune God doesn’t make much difference in us. O forgive us, O Lord, for such blasphemous living and thinking! And grant that by Your Spirit, through Your Son, we would be careful to maintain good works, we ask through Christ, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs:** ARP32AB “What Blessedness” or TPH426 “How Vast the Benefits Divine”

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))**

Titus three versus three through eight. These are God's words. For we ourselves. We're also once foolish. Disobedient. Deceived. Serving, various lusts and pleasures. Living in malice and envy. Hateful and hating one another. But, When the kindness and the love of god, our savior toward man appeared Not by works of righteousness, which we have done.

But according to his mercy, he saved us. Through the washing of regeneration. And renewing of the holy spirit. Whom he poured out on us abundantly through. Jesus christ, our savior. That having been justified. By his grace. We should become heirs according to the hope. Of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, And these things i want you to affirm.

Constantly. That those who have believed in god. Should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good. And profitable. To men.

And that sounds just reading of gods inspired and inherent word. Where we see in verse 3. How great and complete are sinfulness? Once was sinfulness, Within ourselves foolish. Deceived. Serving our own desires. So sinfulness against God of course. Disobedient. Being deceived is also sin against god. Not seeing him or his truth, rightly.

And serving our own desires. Lost some pleasures. Heart, desires and motivations. Rather than serving him. And sending, of course, not only against ourselves and against god. Uh, but against others living in malice and envy. Malice is when you desire ill for others. Envy. Is, when you are bothered that good can come to others.

Hateful and hating one another hating. Being hated and hating. And so, Fully sinful. Or as we say, totally Depraved. And yet. Were saved, not by. Works of righteousness, which we have done. Verse 5. But we're saved when god counts us righteous by grace. Verse 7. He counts us righteous by grace.

And since it's not by our works, But it's by the lord jesus and his works. When jesus. Appears and when jesus obeys in our place, It's not just that. Uh, the son of god appears. Although he does. It's not just that the righteousness of god appears, Although it does.

But especially is the kindness and love. Of god. Our savior verse 4. Towards such sinners as we are. Verse 3. And this. Appearing of god comes. In human history. When the lord jesus enters the world, Lives righteously dies. Atoningly. For us. But this love and kindness of god, appears not only in human history, but in the life and mind and heart.

Of each believer. As God by His Spirit renews us. In order that we are able to see and acknowledge and respond to Christ. To see and acknowledge and respond to God in Christ. So that He not only renews us but He also washes us. And that renewal brings us to faith, making us to be.

Cleansed by. Uh, the Lord Jesus. And so, there's this work of the Holy Spirit. That takes place again. You see this? Uh, triune description. Of our salvation, it is the love of God. Towards man, that appears in. Uh, the Lord Jesus. Who is our savior? God, our savior verse 4 is also Jesus Christ, our savior verse 6, clearly stating that Jesus is God.

And, Uh, it is from God from Jesus Christ. Um, that we received the Holy Spirit, He gives us faith. Let's try and work of salvation by God, the Father and the Son. And the Holy Spirit. Uh, so that we received the Spirit through Christ to unite us. To Christ.

So that not only are we justified by grace, but since we're justified by grace, since our being made right with God, comes by being joined to Jesus. All of the benefits of being going to Jesus, come to us. Therefore, not only justification verse 7, but also adoption and inheritance second half of verse 7.

That having been justified by His grace, we should become heirs. According to the hope of eternal life. And between the one when we were justified and adopted and the other, when we come into the inheritance of that eternal life, for which we hope, there is the work of sanctification.

Those who have believed in God, then verse 8, they have believed into a Christ to have made all the difference. And they're standing with God. Now, instead of Um, those who are under God's wrath, they are righteous before God, those who are guilty before God, righteous before God, Jesus has made all the difference in their future condition.

Rather than perishing in their sin to come into the full enjoyment of their inheritance. The eternal life in God. But in between those who have believed in God, verse a, to find that Jesus continues to make or in the in between time. Also makes all the difference. They are careful to maintain good works.

And not just good works. Then for themselves, but good works that bring benefits to others. And particularly the preaching of this is, what is profitable? Remember, there are those in here at this time do a lot of theological talking, but it doesn't produce godliness. Why doesn't it produce godliness? It doesn't produce godliness because it is not coming from and in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, by His Spirit and Jesus produces.

Godliness. And so, as we preach justification, by grace alone, through faith alone, as we preach adoption, and the certainty of future blessedness. So that we don't see our good works as earning either of these things. Either right, standing with God or our future blessedness yet Uh, we also preach that Jesus makes all the difference.

And a believer's life and all believers. Should be careful. To maintain good works. And this is something. That Titus and the elders, he is to be appointing and create must Um, Affirm. Continually this faithful saying. Which applies especially to the second half of verse 8. That those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.

Uh, but therefore also to the rest of chapter 3, thus far and indeed the whole book thus far, that this is the difference that Christ makes and the believer's life. Uh, this is one of the in the believer's life right now. And increasingly. So, throughout this life. The work of sanctification.

By His Spirit who applies to us. Our union. With Him. And so, each of us should know ourselves to have been apart from Christ. Hopeless centers. And that the only way that we could come to be in Christ, was by the power. And mercy of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And that the difference this should make in our lives then is that we would be careful to maintain good works. And if we're not, then we should come back to Titus 3 and meditate upon it. Am I thinking rightly about what I was apart from from Christ to my thinking rightly about God, my savior, Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

Am I thinking rightly about the difference? The Christ makes in my life ought not I desire. Not these various lusts and pleasures back from verse 3. But rather that the greatness of my savior would be shown. In the difference that He makes. Uh, in my life. The Lord give us to make good use then.

Of this portion of His word, especially when we are not being careful. To maintain good works. Let's pray. We thank you, Father for giving yourself to us and for us. In your Son, in our Lord Jesus. Who is savior together with you and with the Spirit? And we thank you for the work of the Spirit.

Who makes us new and gives us life from Christ washes us clean and Christ. We pray that His work might continue. Giving us the zeal of Christ and the godly character of Christ, more and more. And help us the Lord. When our living for you, Slaves. That we would.

Remember. Who we were apart from you and how kind. And how merciful? About faithful. Now, powerful, you have been as our savior. And grant that by Your Spirit making us to meditate upon your word. You would. Work out more. Of the life of Christ to us. We ask in His name.

Amen.