

“Our Wondrous Salvation”
Titus 3:4-7
(Preached at Trinity, June 4, 2023)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verse 2** Paul charged us on how to live before the people of this world:
"to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men."
2. One of the motives for our patient grace towards all men is our memory of what we were. We were just like them.
Titus 3:3 NAU - "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."
3. But that was before God shined upon us with His grace and mercy.
Verses 4-7 describe God’s wondrous salvation. This passage describes God’s redeeming grace that was wrought in eternity. Last week we focused on **Verses 4-5** and God’s love and mercy.
 - A. God’s love is one of His attributes that God administers according to His sovereign pleasure. God loves us with His infinite everlasting love. By His love He chose to redeem us as His own children. We are precious in His sight. Do you stand amazed over God’s love for you – undeserved, unchanging, infinite love. It was particular electing love. God chose to love you.
 - B. Paul says it was also according to God’s mercy
Titus 3:5 NAU - "according to His mercy
 1. God’s mercy is also according to His sovereign grace. Both love and mercy are Divine attributes. God manifests His attributes according to His sovereign will. He sovereignly chose those who would be the recipients of His divine mercy.
Romans 9:15 NAU - "For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."
Ultimately, God does all things for His own glory – to which we must say amen.
Ephesians 1:5-6 NAU - "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."
 3. In all humility we must place ourselves before the sovereign mercy of God. We confess that we are helpless, and unworthy of God favor. Jesus told a parable of a proud Pharisee and a tax collector.
 - a. The Pharisee was proud of his attainments:
Luke 18:10-12 NAU - "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get."

- b. The tax collector, on the other hand, confessed his unworthiness and appealed to God's mercy
Luke 18:13-14 NAU - "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' ¹⁴ "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other"

C. Paul adds that God has caused His love and mercy to appear upon the earth. "But when the kindness of God our Savior and *His* love for mankind appeared,"

1. Paul is referring chiefly to the incarnation of Christ as God's revelation of His eternal purpose of salvation.
2 Timothy 1:9-10 NAU - "who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, ¹⁰ but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,"
2. The word can also mean "to shine."
Luke 1:79 NAU - "To shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace."
3. God has shined the light of His redeeming grace through the Gospel of Christ, as revealed in His Word.
2 Corinthians 4:4-6 NAU - "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

I. Paul also gives us the false ground of salvation

Titus 3:5 NAU - "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness"

- A. Election was not on the basis of any foreseen works. It is unconditional—that is, it is not conditioned upon anything in us.
 1. Our salvation is completely according to God's mercy
Titus 3:5 NAU - "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy"
 2. Paul used the same language in **2 Timothy**
2 Timothy 1:9 NAU - "who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,"

- B. God didn't choose us because of some foreseen merit, not because of foreseen goodness.
1. Paul dispels such thinking in **Romans 3**
Romans 3:10-12 NAU - "There is none righteous, not even one; ¹¹ There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; ¹² All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."
 2. Paul is quoting from Psalm 14
Psalm 14:2-3 NAU - " The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. ³ They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one."
 3. The best works of human beings are tainted by sin. They do nothing to make us acceptable in the eyes of God.
 4. Works will always be present in the life of the believer. Our life should be characterized by good works – see **Verse 8**.
 Good works are always present in the believer but they are the fruit, not the cause of his salvation. Jesus didn't come to die for us because He saw something in us that made us worthy.

II. Paul gives the instrumental cause of our salvation

Titus 3:5 NAU - "by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,"

- A. How does God make His eternal salvation effectual in the life of His elect?
1. God has sent forth His Holy Spirit.
Matthew Henry – “In the economy of our salvation, the applying and effecting part is especially attributed to the Holy Spirit. We are said to be born of the Spirit, to be quickened and sanctified by the Spirit, to be led and guided, strengthened and helped, by the Spirit. Through him we mortify sin, perform duty, walk in God's ways; all the acts and operations of the divine life in us, the works and fruits of righteousness without us, all are through this blessed and Holy Spirit, who is therefore called the Spirit of life, and of grace and holiness; all grace is from him.”¹
 2. Paul describes the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit as washing and renewing. This describes the work of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart.
 It describes the new birth. Jesus says, “You must be born again.”
 3. The Holy Spirit is the giver of spiritual life. The Creator of the new birth. He is also the agent of our sanctification – of making us holy.
 The new birth is an instantaneous change. Sanctification is a life-long process.

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2374.

- B. Paul then declares Jesus Christ as the Agent of our salvation
Titus 3:6 NAU - "whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,"
1. Jesus is the source of it all.
 Matthew Henry calls Him the "procuring cause of all."²
Acts 4:12 NAU - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."
Romans 11:36 NAU - "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever."
 2. With this Paul completes the Trinitarian model.

Conclusion:

1. The Father has elected a people by His kindness, love, and mercy.
 The Holy Spirit came regenerating, illuminating, and convicting granting faith and repentance.
 The Lord Jesus Christ came as our Redeemer, providing forgiveness and reconciliation through His suffering and death on the Cross.
 The Holy Spirit is sent by both the Father and the Son.
2. Herein is our wondrous salvation—God's saving grace.
Titus 3:3-4 NAU - "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"
3. This is so that we might receive the wondrous fruit of our redemption.
Titus 3:7 NAU - "so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life."
4. And what is our proper response to so great a salvation?
 - a. Our first response is to receive it. Although salvation is by God's sovereign grace alone, every human being is responsible for receiving it.
 We see this over and over in Scripture.
John 3:16 NAU - "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."
 - b. Our second proper response is love, gratitude, and worship.

² Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2375.